

THE BOOK OF POETRY

BRITISH POETS

PAGES 1167-1514

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THE BOOK OF POETRY

Collected from the Whole Field
of British and American Poetry.
Also Translations of Important
Poems from Foreign Languages.

Selected and Annotated
with an Introduction by
EDWIN MARKHAM

*Poetry fettered,
fetters the human race.*

—William Blake.

WITHDRAWN

VOLUME V

WM. H. WISE & Co.

NEW YORK

1927

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Collected from the Whole Field
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Poems from Foreign Languages

Edited and Annotated
by
W. H. WISE

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BRITISH POETS

FROM 1631

TO 1784

JOHN DRYDEN

ENGLAND, 1631-1700

THERE are blemishes upon the fame of Dryden. In spite of sincere attempts to acquit him of time-serving, it appears that he was inclined to truckle to men of power; that his swerving of religious faith was wholly from within is difficult to believe. He confessed that in drama he would if necessary bend his genius to the folly of his age. All this indicates a low moral idealism, even if Dryden had the decency and courage to admit (in the *Ode to the Memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew*) that he had degraded his genius. And aside from moral considerations, there is certainly a great deal of windy and mechanical verse in Dryden's pages.

These things are mentioned first so that they may be known and thrust into the background. For, in spite of imperfections, Dryden was one of the colossi of English letters. Even though we cannot acknowledge him in the foremost rank of poetry, we must concede his place as a leading spirit of modern literature (he was the Ben Jonson of his half-century) and as perhaps the greatest all-around craftsman who ever flourished an English pen.

In the earliest of his critical essays, standing as prefaces to some of his plays, we have the real beginning of modern prose style. Dryden was the first of noteworthy English critics in time, and he is not far from first in place. His powers were leisurely in developing. Only at fifty did he first write satire. Then in the anatomy of political character, *Absalom and Achitophel*, and in the literary satire, *MacFlecknoe*, we have a peerless Dryden. Yet these pieces lack afflatus of intense personal indignation. Like too great a bulk of Dryden's verse, they are outwardly inspired, occasional, journalistic. This is

JOHN DRYDEN

why Dryden never achieves the pinnacles of Helicon. But within its confines, what verse! As art it is superb: resonance, momentum, claw of word and clutch of phrase, deftness and force of rhythm, subtle perception of character, and the very apotheosis of triumphant face-slapping.

Attempting sheer poetry, Dryden left at least two distinguished examples of the longer lyric, besides some songs in his plays. The *Ode to the Memory of Mistress Anne Killigrew* and the *Alexander's Feast* have secured for Dryden a reputation only a little less lofty now than in the eighteenth century. But most congenial to Dryden's cast of mind were those satires in heroic couplets. Pope wrote of these couplets:

"Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full-resounding line,
The long majestic march, and energy divine."

And perhaps with the same passages in mind, Lowell wrote: "In the second class of English poets no one stands so high as Dryden. He was a strong thinker, who sometimes carried common sense to a height where it catches the light of a diviner air, and warmed reason till it had wellnigh the illuminating property of intuition."

Under the Portrait of John Milton

PREFIXED TO "PARADISE LOST," 1688

THREE Poets, in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy and England did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of nature could no further go:
To make a third, she joined the former two.

JOHN DRYDEN

Life a Cheat

WHEN I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fooled with hope, men favor the deceit,
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay:
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and while it says, we shall be blessed
With some new joys, cuts off what we possessed.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again,
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And, from the dregs of life, think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.
I'm tired with waiting for this chemic gold,
Which fools us young, and beggars us when old.

Alexander's Feast;

OR, THE POWER OF MUSIC.—AN ODE IN HONOR OF ST.
CECILIA'S DAY

'T WAS at the royal feast for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son,
Aloft, in awful state,
The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne;
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtles bound,
(So should desert in arms be crowned)
The lovely Thais by his side
Sate, like a blooming Eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair!
None but the brave,
None but the brave,
None but the brave deserves the fair.

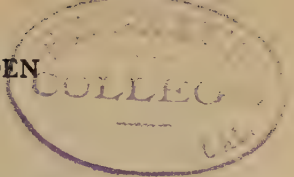
JOHN DRYDEN

Timotheus, placed on high
Amid the tuneful quire,
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove,
Who left his blissful seats above,
(Such is the power of mighty Love).
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spires he rode,
When he to fair Olympia pressed,
And while he sought her snowy breast;
Then round her slender waist he curled,
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the
world,
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound—
A present deity! they shout around;
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound.
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus, then, the sweet musician sung—
Of Bacchus ever fair and ever young;
The jolly god in triumph comes:
Sound the trumpets! beat the drums!
Flushed with a purple grace,
He shows his honest face:
Now give the hautboys breath—he comes, he comes!
Bacchus, ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain.
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure;
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure:

JOHN DRYDEN

Rich the treasure,
Sweet the pleasure;
Sweet is pleasure after pain.



Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain;
Fought all his battle o'er again;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew
the slain.

The master saw the madness rise—
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And while he Heaven and Earth defied,
Changed his hand, and checked his pride.

He chose a mournful Muse,
Soft pity to infuse:
He swung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen—
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted, at his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed;
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes.
With downcast looks the joyless victor sate
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of chance below;
And, now and then, a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That Love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred sound to move,
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.

JOHN DRYDEN

War, he sung, is toil and trouble;
Honor but an empty bubble—
Never ending, still beginning—
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,
Think, O think it worth enjoying!
Lovely Thais sits beside thee—
Take the goods the gods provide thee.
The many rend the sky with loud applause;
So Love was crowned, but Music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length, with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the golden lyre again!
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain,
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him, like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark, hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head!
As awaked from the dead,
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge! revenge! Timotheus cries;
See the Furies arise!
See the snakes that they rear,
How they hiss in their hair,
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes!
Behold a ghastly band,
Each a torch in his hand!
These are Grecian ghosts, that in battle were slain,

JOHN DRYDEN.

And unburied remain,
Inglorious, on the plain!
Give the vengeance due
To the valiant crew.

Behold how they toss their torches on high,
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods!
The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy;
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And, like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus, long ago—
Ere heaving bellows learned to blow,
While organs yet were mute—
Timotheus, to his breathing flute,
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecilia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame;¹
The sweet enthusiast from her sacred store
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds,
With Nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before.
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown:
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down!

¹ the organ.

JOHN DRYDEN

A Song for St. Cecilia's Day

Cecilia is the patron saint of music, especially of organ music. This Dryden poem is based on the old idea (the true idea) that in the beginning the atoms of the universe swung into their orderly places under the drive of musical harmony, a harmony now known as "the music of the spheres." We are told at the end of the poem that this music will end in one terrific note—the sound of the Trumpet on the Day of Judgment, the closing of man's strange eventful history.

I.

FROM harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began.
When Nature underneath a heap
Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
Arise, ye more than dead!
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
In order to their stations leap,
And Music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
This universal frame began:
From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.

II.

What passion cannot Music raise and quell?
When Jubal struck the chorded shell
His listening brethren stood around,

JOHN DRYDEN

And, wondering, on their faces fell
To worship that celestial sound.
Less than a god they thought there could not dwell
Within the hollow of that shell
That spoke so sweetly and so well.
What passion cannot Music raise and quell?

III.

The trumpet's loud clangor
Excites us to arms,
With shrill notes of anger
And mortal alarms.
The double double double beat
Of the thundering drum
Cries, "Hark! the foes come;
Charge, charge, 'tis too late to retreat!"

IV.

The soft complaining flute
In dying notes discovers
The woes of hopeless lovers,
Whose dirge is whispered by the warbling lute.

V.

Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation,
Fury, frantic indignation,
Depth of pains, and height of passion
For the fair, disdainful dame.

VI.

But oh! what art can teach,
What human voice can reach,

JOHN DRYDEN

The sacred organ's praise?
Notes inspiring holy love,
Notes that wing their heavenly ways
To mend the choirs above.

VII.

Orpheus could lead the savage race,
And trees uprooted left their place
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia raised the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given
An angel heard, and straight appeared—
Mistaking Earth for Heaven!

GRAND CHORUS.

As from the power of sacred lays
The spheres began to move,
And sung the great Creator's praise
To all the blest above;
So when the last and dreadful hour
This crumbling pageant shall devour,
The trumpet shall be heard on high,
The dead shall live, the living die,
And Music shall untune the sky.

Song

FAREWELL, ungrateful traitor!
Farewell, my perjured swain!
Let never injured creature
Believe a man again.
The pleasure of possessing
Surpasses all expressing;
But 'tis too short a blessing,
And love too long a pain.

'Tis easy to deceive us,
In pity of your pain;
But when we love, you leave us,
To rail at you in vain.
Before we have descried it,
There is no bliss beside it;
But she, that once has tried it,
Will never love again.

The passion you pretended,
Was only to obtain;
But when the charm is ended,
The charmer you disdain.
Your love by ours we measure,
Till we have lost our treasure;
But dying is a pleasure,
When living is a pain.

JOHN DRYDEN

*Achitophel (Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl
of Shaftesbury)*

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

OF these the false Achitophel was first;
A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay:
A daring pilot in extremity,
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit.
Great wits are sure to madness near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide:
Else why should he, with wealth and honor blest,
Refuse his age the needful hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please;
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?

*Zimri (George Villiers, Duke of
Buckingham)*

FROM "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL"

*Here is one of the most brilliant passages in the language:
note the glittering epigrams.*

A MAN so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long;

JOHN DRYDEN

But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chemist, fiddler, statesman and buffoon;
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Beside ten-thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes,
And both, to show his judgement, in extremes;
So over violent, or over civil,
That every man with him was God or Devil.
In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded but desert.
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late,
He had his jest, and they had his estate.

ROBERT WILDE

ENGLAND, 17TH CENTURY

Epitaph

HERE lies a piece of Christ; a star in dust;
A vein of gold; a china dish that must
Be used in heaven, when God shall feed the just.

JOHN WILMOT, EARL OF ROCHESTER

ENGLAND, 1647-1680

On Charles II

HERE lies our Sovereign Lord the King,
Whose word no man relies on,
Who never said a foolish thing,
Nor ever did a wise one.

ANONYMOUS

ENGLAND, 1658

The Queen of Fairies

COME follow, follow me,
You, fairy elves that be,
Which circle on the green—
Come follow Mab, your queen!
Hand in hand, let's dance a round,
For this place is fairy ground.

When mortals are at rest
And snoring in their nest,
Unheard and unespied,
Through key-holes we do glide;
Over tables, stools and shelves,
We trip it with our fairy elves.

And, if the house be foul,
Or platter, dish, or bowl,
Up stairs we nimbly creep,
And find the sluts asleep:
There we pinch their arms and thighs—
None escapes, nor none espies.

But if the house be swept,
And from uncleanness kept,
We praise the household maid,
And surely she is paid;
For we do use before we go,
To drop a tester in her shoe.

ANONYMOUS

Upon a mushroom's head,
Our table we do spread;
A grain of rye, or wheat,
Is manchet, which we eat.
Pearly drops of dew we drink
In acorn cups filled to the brink.

The brains of nightingales,
With unctuous dew of snails,
Between two nutshells stewed,
Is meat that's easily chewed;
And the beards of little mice
Do make a feast of wondrous price.

The grasshopper and the fly,
Serve for our minstrelsy.
Grace said, we dance a while,
And so the time beguile;
And when the moon doth hide her head,
The glow-worm lights us home to bed.

On tops of dewy grass,
So nimbly do we pass,
The young and tender stalk
Never bends when we do walk;
Yet in the morning may be seen
Where we, the night before, have been.

COUNTESS OF WINCHELSEA (ANNE FINCH)

ENGLAND, 1660-1720

LADY WINCHELSEA had touches of the divine fire; and it appears that she was one of the three or four who had these touches in the long stretch between Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Thomson's *The Seasons*. She was celebrated by Pope under the name of Ardelia.

A Nocturnal Reverie

IN such a night . . .

When in some river, overhung with green,
The waving moon and trembling leaves are seen,
When freshened grass now bears itself upright,
And makes cool banks to pleasing rest invite,
When spring the woodbine and the bramble-rose,
And where the sleepy cowslip sheltered grows,
Whilst now a paler hue the foxglove takes,
Yet chequers still with red the dusky brakes,
Where scattered glowworms—but in twilight fine—
Show trivial beauties, watch their hour to shine,
While Salisbury stands the test of every light,
In perfect charms and perfect beauty bright;
When odors, which declined repelling day,
Through temperate air uninterrupted stray;
When darkened groves their softest shadows wear,
And falling waters we distinctly hear;
When through the gloom more venerable shows
Some ancient fabric awful in repose;
While sunburned hills their swarthy looks conceal,
And swelling haycocks thicken up the vale;

ANNE FINCH

When the loosed horse now, as his pasture leads,
Comes slowly grazing through the adjoining meads,
Whose stealing pace and lengthened shade we fear,
Till torn-up forage in his teeth we hear;
When nibbling sheep at large pursue their food,
And unmolested kine rechew the cud;
When curlews cry beneath the village-walls,
And to her straggling brood the partridge calls;
Their short-lived jubilee the creatures keep,
Which but endures, whilst tyrant Man doth sleep;
When a sedate content the spirit feels,
And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;
But silent musings urge the mind to seek
Something too high for syllables to speak;
Till the free soul to a composedness charmed,
Finding the elements of rage disarmed,
O'er all below a solemn quiet grown,
Joys in the inferior world, and thinks it like her own—
In such a night let me abroad remain,
Till morning breaks and all's confused again;
Our cares, our toils, our clamors are renewed,
Our pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.

JOHN, LORD CUTTS

ENGLAND, 1661-1707

Song

ONLY tell her that I love:
Leave the rest to her and Fate:
Some kind planet from above
May perhaps her pity move:
Lovers on their stars must wait—
Only tell her that I love!

JOHN, LORD CUTTS

Why, O why should I despair!
Mercy's pictured in her eye:
If she once vouchsafe to hear,
Welcome Hope and farewell Fear!
She's too good to let me die.—
Why, O why should I despair?

WILLIAM WALSH
ENGLAND, 1663-1708

The Despairing Lover

DISTRACTED with care
For Phyllis the fair,
Since nothing could move her,
Poor Damon, her lover,
Resolves in despair
No longer to languish,
Nor bear so much anguish,
But, mad with his love,
To a precipice goes,
Where a leap from above
Would finish his woes.

When in rage he came there,
Beholding how steep
The sides did appear,
And the bottom how deep,
His torments projecting,
And sadly reflecting
That a lover forsaken
A new love may get,

WILLIAM WALSH

But a neck when once broken
Can never be set,
And, that he could die
Whenever he would,
Whereas he could live
But as long as he could,
How grievous soever
The torment might grow,
He scorned to endeavor
To finish it so,
But, bold, unconcerned
At thoughts of the pain,
He calmly returned
To his cottage again.

JONATHAN SWIFT

ENGLAND, 1667-1745

DRYDEN, it will be recalled, early said, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." Yet if poetry resides in emotion communicated, we may, I think, grant the title to Swift in rare passages where his bitterness darkens the page. Much of his verse is very bad, even as verse; much of it is revolting in thought; but where will one find other such bawls of savage humor as in Jove's speech in *The Day of Judgment*, and such cynicism as in the *Verses on the Death of Dr. Swift*? In these verses, he describes the reaction of the world upon his decease. The cynicism of the piece almost amounts to melancholy.

JONATHAN SWIFT

From "A Rhapsody on Poetry"

HOBBS clearly proves that every creature
Lives in a state of war by nature.
The greater for the smallest watch,
But meddle seldom with their match.
A whale of moderate size will draw
A shoal of herrings down his maw;
A fox with geese his belly crams;
A wolf destroys a thousand lambs.
But search among the rhyming race,
The brave are worried by the base.
If on Parnassus' top you sit,
You rarely bite, are always bit.

* * * * *

The vermin only tease and pinch
Their foes superior by an inch.
So, naturalists observe, a flea
Hath smaller fleas that on him prey;
And these have smaller still to bite 'em,
And so proceed *ad infinitum*.
Thus every poet in his kind
Is bit by him that comes behind:
Who, though too little to be seen,
Can tease and gall and give the spleen.

JONATHAN SWIFT

From "On the Death of Dr. Swift"

This "poem" was suggested by the maxim of Rochefoucauld that "In the adversity of our best friends, we always find something that does not displease us."

THE time is not remote when I
Must by the course of nature die;
When, I foresee, my special friends
Will try to find their private ends;
And, though 'tis hardly understood
Which way my death can do them good,
Yet thus, methinks, I hear them speak:
"See how the Dean begins to break!
"He recollects not what he says;
"He cannot call his friends to mind;
"Forgets the place where he last dined;
"Plies you with stories o'er and o'er;
"He told them fifty times before.
"His stomach, too, begins to fail:
"Last year we thought him strong and hale;
"But now he's quite another thing:
"I wish he may hold out till spring!"

Behold the fatal day arrive!
"How is the Dean?" "He's just alive."
Now the departing prayer is read;
He hardly breathes—the Dean is dead.
Before the passing-bell begun,
The news through half the town is run.
From Dublin soon to London spread,
'Tis told at court, "The Dean is dead."
And Lady Suffolk, in the spleen,
Runs laughing up to tell the Queen.

JONATHAN SWIFT

The Queen, so gracious mild and good,
Cries, "Is he gone! 'tis time he should.
"He's dead, you say, then let him rot.
"I'm glad the medals were forgot.
"I promised him, I own, but when?
"I only was the princess then."

My female friends, whose tender hearts
Have better learned to act their parts,
Receive the news in doleful dumps:
"The Dean is dead: (Pray what are trumps?)
"Then, Lord have mercy on his soul!
"(Ladies, I'll venture for the vole.)
"Six Deans, they say, must bear the pall:
"(I wish I knew what king to call.)"

WILLIAM CONGREVE

ENGLAND, 1670-1729

A Hue and Cry after Fair Amoret

FAIR Amoret is gone astray—
Pursue and seek her, every lover:
I'll tell the signs by which you may
The wandering Shepherdess discover.

Coquette and coy at once her air,
Both studied, though both seem neglected:
Careless she is, with artful care,
Affecting to seem unaffected.

WILLIAM CONGREVE

With skill her eyes dart every glance,
Yet change so soon you'd ne'er suspect them;
For she'd persuade they wound by chance,
Though certain aim and art direct them.

She likes herself, yet others hates
For that which in herself she prizes;
And, while she laughs at them, forgets
She is the thing that she despises.

Lesbia

WHEN Lesbia first I saw, so heavenly fair,
With eyes so bright and with that awful air,
I thought my heart would durst so high aspire
As bold as his who snatched celestial fire.
But soon as ever the beauteous idiot spoke,
Forth from her coral lips such folly broke:
Like balm the trickling nonsense healed my wound,
And what her eyes enthralled, her tongue unbound.

From "The Mourning Bride"

MUSIC hath charms to soothe a savage breast,
To soften rocks, or bend a knotted oak.
I've read that things inanimate have moved,
And, as with living souls, have been informed,
By magic numbers and persuasive sound.

JOSEPH ADDISON

ENGLAND, 1672-1719

ADDISON'S poetry in general is rhetorical prose in verse, though his poetic tragedy *Cato*, which Samuel Johnson pronounced the noblest production of his genius, is starred with lofty poetic passages. Voltaire thought "Mr. Addison's *Cato* the greatest character that ever was brought on any stage." His most original production was the series of sketches in the *Spectator*, in which Sir Roger de Coverly is the central figure.

Cato's Soliloquy on Immortality

FROM "CATO"

IT must be so.—Plato, thou reasonest well!—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
Of falling into naught? why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us:
'Tis Heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man.
Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, the unbounded prospect, lies before me;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us
(And that there is, all nature cries aloud
Through all her works) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in must be happy.

JOSEPH ADDISON

But when? or where? This world was made for Cæsar.
I'm weary of conjectures. This must end them.

(Laying his hand on his sword.)

Thus am I doubly armed: my death and life,
My bane and antidote, are both before me.
This in a moment brings me to an end;
But this informs me I shall never die.
The soul, secure in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,
The wreck of matter, and the crush of worlds.

An Ode: the Spacious Firmament

THE spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
The unwearied Sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And nightly to the listening Earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

JOSEPH ADDISON

What though in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball;
What though nor real voice nor sound
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice;
For ever singing as they shine,
'The Hand that made us is divine.'

ISAAC WATTS
ENGLAND, 1674-1748

The Day of Judgement

This fearsome poem is interesting as showing the dark horrific dream of a literal hell-fire that haunted men in the centuries before Emanuel Swedenborg rose in the eighteenth century to fling the light of reason upon this planetary darkness. In his "Heaven and Hell" (one of the great books of the world) he reveals the real hell—a hell terrific enough—the hell that men themselves create—the hell that begins here on earth and goes on into the hereafter as the natural, inevitable, consequence of an evil and disordered life.

WHEN the fierce North-wind with his airy forces
Rears up the Baltic to a foaming fury;
And the red lightning with a storm of hail comes
Rushing amain down;

How the poor sailors stand amazed and tremble,
While the hoarse thunder, like a bloody trumpet,
Roars a loud onset to the gaping waters
Quick to devour them.

ISAAC WATTS

Such shall the noise be, and the wild disorder
(If things eternal may be like these earthly)
Such the dire terror when the great Archangel
Shakes the creation;

Tears the strong pillars of the vault of Heaven,
Breaks up old marble, the repose of princes,
Sees the graves open, and the bones arising,
Flames all around them.

Hark, the shrill outcries of the guilty wretches!
Lively bright horror and amazing anguish
Stare thro' their eyelids, while the living worm lies
Gnawing within them.

Thoughts, like old vultures, prey upon their heart-
strings,
And the smart twinges, when the eye beholds the
Lofty Judge frowning, and a flood of vengeance
Rolling afore him.

Hopeless immortals! how they scream and shiver,
While devils push them to the pit wide-yawning
Hideous and gloomy, to receive them headlong
Down to the center!

Stop here, my fancy: (all away, ye horrid
Doleful ideas!) come, arise to Jesus,
How He sits God-like! and the saints around Him
Throned, yet adoring!

O may I sit there when He comes triumphant,
Dooming the nations! then ascend to glory,
While our Hosannas all along the passage
Shout the Redeemer.

EDWARD YOUNG

ENGLAND, 1684-1765

YOUNG was an Episcopal clergyman and at one time was chaplain to George II.

It is probable that the remarkable but very unequal *Night Thoughts* of Young will never recover much of the great reputation which it held for long years. "It has a tone", says Saintsbury, "only to be described as theatrical-religious." However, "the poem deserves the praise due to very fine and, in part at least, very original versification." To George Eliot, "the sweet garden-breath of early enjoyment lingers about many a page of the *Night Thoughts*, giving an extrinsic charm to passages of stilted rhetoric and false sentiment. It [his poetry] baptizes egoism as religion."

By a strange grotesquerie, the work of Young which least declines from its general excellence is the *Love of Fame, or The Universal Passion*, which anticipates the mold and method of Pope's best satire. Satire is doubtless only one of the outlying provinces of poetry, but it is often fascinating to read. Doctor Johnson, having called *Love of Fame* "a very great performance", added, as disparagement, that it is "a series of epigrams"; but this, as Saintsbury points out, should hardly be a bar to its popularity nowadays.

Man

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

HOW poor, how rich, how abject, how august,
How complicate, how wonderful, is man!
How passing wonder He who made him such!
Who centered in our make such strange extremes,

EDWARD YOUNG

From different natures marvelously mixed,
Connection exquisite of distant worlds!
Distinguished link in being's endless chain!
Midway from nothing to the Deity!
A beam ethereal, sullied, and absorpt!
Though sullied and dishonored, still divine:
Dim miniature of greatness absolute!
An heir of glory, a frail child of dust!
Helpless immortal! insect infinite!
A worm! a god!—I tremble at myself,
And in myself am lost. At home a stranger,
Thought wanders up and down, surprised, aghast,
And wondering at her own. How reason reels!

Oh, what a miracle to man is man!
Triumphantly distressed! What joy! what dread!
Alternately transported and alarmed!
What can preserve my life? or what destroy?
An angel's arm can't snatch me from the grave;
Legions of angels can't confine me there.

The Lapse of Time

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

THE bell strikes one. We take no note of time
But from its loss; to give it then a tongue
Is wise in man. As if an angel spoke,
I feel the solemn sound. If heard aright,
It is the knell of my departed hours.
Where are they? With the years beyond the flood.
It is the signal that demands dispatch;
How much is to be done! My hopes and fears
Start up alarmed, and o'er life's narrow verge
Look down—on what? A fathomless abyss!
A dread eternity! how surely mine!

EDWARD YOUNG

Oh, the dark days of vanity! while here
How tasteless! and how terrible when gone!
Gone? they ne'er go; when past they haunt us still:
The spirit walks of every day deceased
And smiles an angel, or a Fury frowns.
Nor death nor life delights us. If time past
And time possess both pain us, what can please?
That which the Deity to please ordained—
Time used! The man who consecrates his hours
By vigorous efforts and an honest aim,
At once he draws the sting of life and death:
He walks with Nature, and her paths are peace.

Procrastination

FROM "NIGHT THOUGHTS"

BE wise to-day: 'tis madness to defer:
Next day the fatal precedent will plead:
Thus on, till wisdom is pushed out of life.
Procrastination is the thief of time.

* * * * *

All promise is poor dilatory man,
And that through every stage: when young, indeed,
In full content we, sometimes, nobly rest,
Unanxious for ourselves; and only wish,
As duteous sons, our fathers were more wise.
At thirty man suspects himself a fool;
Knows it at forty, and reforms his plan;
At fifty chides his infamous delay,
Pushes his prudent purpose to resolve;
In all the magnanimity of thought
Resolves, and re-resolves, then, dies the same.

EDWARD YOUNG

Fame and Envy

FROM "EPISTLE TO POPE"

WITH fame in just proportion envy grows;
The man that makes a character makes foes;
Slight peevish insects round a genius rise,
As a bright day awakes the world of flies.
With hearty malice, but with feeble wing,
To show they live, they flutter and they sting;
But as by depredations wasps proclaim
The fairest fruit, so these the fairest fame.

GEORGE BERKELEY

ENGLAND, 1685-1753

From "The Prospect in America"

WESTWARD the course of empire takes its way:
The four first acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

ALEXANDER POPE

ENGLAND, 1688-1744

WHAT has become of the great poet Alexander Pope, the darling and the dread of his age?

That he was indeed "great" neither Addison nor Swift nor any of his contemporaries, even those who rankled under his malignant satire, would have denied. Voltaire thought Pope "the most elegant, the most correct poet; and, at the same time, the most harmonious that England ever gave birth to." Going a step further, Byron acclaimed him "the most perfect of our poets and the purest of our moralists. . . . He is the moral poet of all civilization, and, as such, let us hope that he will one day be the national poet of mankind." Nor did Byron confine his praise to moral considerations; he appeared to believe that Pope showed, in his curious *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, the quality of imagination possessed by the romantic poets. But Emerson, in his *English Traits*, dismisses Pope in this wise: "Thus poetry is degraded and made ornamental. Pope and his school wrote poetry fit to put around frosted cake."

Was Pope a poet? The answer to the old question rests, I suppose, on one couplet in his *Essay on Criticism*, a work which Doctor Johnson thought would have alone placed its author among the first critics and first poets of England. To my mind, the most remarkable thing about the poem is that Pope composed it at the age of twenty. It contains the striking couplet:

"True wit is nature to advantage dressed;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

Now, almost all his life Pope strove for "true wit", to sharpen, to polish the ideas of others. The very couplet

ALEXANDER POPE

in which he makes this (as we may call it) declaration of intent, is a boiling-down of half a dozen prose lines of the French critic Boileau. Pope, therefore, is "classic" since he cares more for the expression of thought than for thought itself.

We see, then, the restriction self-imposed by Pope. He is not trying to express the wild, sweet things within him, as other poets do: he does not feel the creative impulse that makes all emotions seem new. No, it is not the stir of the heart that sets his pen in motion, but the brain of the artificer, striving to put an idea compactly, pointedly, smoothly.

Therefore we are not surprised to discover that most of Pope's writing is bare-faced borrowing, or translation. In these—strictly within the limits he set himself—he is successful, even though he brought forth an *Iliad* that was not Homer but Pope. He made the ten-syllable rhymed couplet "light, bright, glittering, varied in a manner almost impossible to account for, tipped with the neatest, smartest, sharpest rhyme, and volleying on the dazzled . . . reader a sort of salvo of *feux-d'artifice*, skipping, crackling, scattering color and sound all round and about him." These couplets, usually concluding their thought within themselves, Pope built with an uncanny skill into "paragraphs".

But these things leave us cold. Only at whiles does Pope do more than excite our admiration. In his satires, however, he occasionally rises from intellect to passion, because he himself is transported. Thus in *The Dunciad* (epic of the dunces) and in the "character of Atticus" (where he vents his spite against Addison) we are aware that Pope was a man of organs, senses, passions—in other words, a poet. Unfortunate it is that personal malice should have been the chief "inspiration" for Pope's lofty flights; but Pope was a notoriously faulty man, being in the first place diseased, splenetic, then snobbish, stingy, and unveracious.

ALEXANDER POPE

I quote on this point an interesting passage from Alfred Welsh:

"[His character was] a collection of contradictions. Professing contempt of the world, he lived upon its pleasure. Pretending to neglect fame, he courted it. Affecting to ignore the critics, he writhed under their attacks. Scorning the great, he loved to enumerate the men of high rank with whom he was acquainted. Tells his friends that 'he has a heart for all, a home for all, and, whatever they may think, a fortune for all,' yet entertained scantily. . . . Avowing benevolence, he was guilty of meanness which it is impossible to defend. Secretly or openly, he pursued with an implacable vengeance, all who questioned or slighted his poetical supremacy; and still he could write:

'Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the faults I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.'

Dennis, who had been wantonly assailed, speaks of him as a 'little affected hypocrite, who had nothing in his mouth at the same time but truth, candor, friendship, good-nature, humanity, and magnanimity.' In social intercourse he delighted in artifice, and was always an actor. If he wanted a favor, he contrived to obtain it indirectly, by unsuspected hints at its general convenience. It is said that he hardly drank tea without a stratagem, and used to play the politician about cabbages and turnips."

But of Pope's masterpiece we have yet to speak. The most airy, the most ingenious and delightful of his compositions is generally considered to be *The Rape of the Lock*. Pope himself declared, and critics have agreed, that he never showed more skill than in this mock-heroic work which holds a recognized supremacy among the productions of "the drawing-room muse." In that last phrase is the secret of its success. For in *The Rape of the Lock*,

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Pope approaches a subject with which he has first-hand acquaintance—namely, the manners, prejudices, opinions of the set in which he moved, the drawing-room set, wherein mingled belles, beaux, dowagers, coxcombs, coquettes, virtuosos, and the rest of the character of Queen Anne's age. How strikingly Pope brings out the spirit of the time in its mingling of cold cynicism with the most formal manners of chivalry!

Greatness

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

HONOR and shame from no condition rise:
Act well your part, there all the honor lies.

ALEXANDER POPE

The Future

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

HEAVEN from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescribed, their present state:
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know:
Or who could suffer being here below?

The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
O blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven,
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall;
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore.
What future bliss he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.

* * * * *

Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk or milky way,
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill, a humbler heaven—

ALEXANDER POPE

Some safer world, in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be, contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wing, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company.

Nature's Chain

FROM "ESSAY ON MAN"

LOOK round our world, behold the chain of love
Combining all below and all above;
See plastic nature working to this end,
The single atoms each to other tend,
Attract, attracted to, the next in place,
Formed and impelled its neighbor to embrace.

See matter next, with various life endued,
Press to one center still—the general good.
See dying vegetables life sustain,
See life dissolving vegetate again:
All forms that perish other forms supply
(By turns we catch the vital breath, and die)
Like bubbles on the sea of matter borne,
They rise, they break, and to that sea return.
Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all-preserving Soul
Connects each being, greatest with the least;
Made beast in aid of man, and man of beast;
All served, all serving; nothing stands alone;
The chain holds on, and where it ends, unknown.

ALEXANDER POPE

Has God, thou fool! worked solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly spreads the flowery lawn.
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
The bounding steed you pompously bestride
Shares with his lord the pleasure and the pride.
Is thine alone the seed that strews the plain?
The birds of heaven shall vindicate their grain.
Thine the full harvest of the golden year?
Part pays, and justly, the deserving steer:
The hog that plows not, nor obeys thy call,
Lives on the labors of this lord of all.

Fragments from "Essay on Man"

KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan:
The proper study of mankind is Man.

What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
Alas? not all the blood of all the Howards.

A wit's a feather, and a chief a rod:
An honest man's the noblest work of God.

If parts allure thee, think how Bacon shined,
The wisest, brightest, meanest of mankind:
Or ravished with the whistling of a name,
See Cromwell damned to everlasting fame.

ALEXANDER POPE

Know then the truth (enough for man to know)
Virtue alone is happiness below.

All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.

All nature is but art, unknown to thee;
All chance, direction, which thou canst not see;
All discord, harmony not understood;
All partial evil, universal good;
And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.¹

Vice is a monster of so frightful mien
As to be hated needs but to be seen;
Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law,
Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw;
Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite;
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage,
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age.
Pleased with this bauble still, as that before,
Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor day is o'er.

For forms of government let fools contest;
Whate'er is best administered is best,
For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right,
In faith and hope the world will disagree,
But all mankind's concern is charity.

¹ Whatever is, is in its causes just.—Dryden. This epigram is reasonable—not so the saying of Pope: "Whatever is, is right," for the world is peppered with things that are not right, yet those things are in their causes just; for they all rise out of law.—E. M.

ALEXANDER POPE

The Author's Miseries

FROM "PROLOGUE TO THE SATIRES"

SHUT, shut the door, good John! fatigued I said,
Tie up the knocker, say I'm sick, I'm dead.
The Dog-star rages! nay, 'tis past a doubt,
All Bedlam, or Parnassus, is let out:
Fire in each eye, and papers in each hand,
They rave, recite, and madden round the land.

* * * * *

A dire dilemma! either way I'm sped:
If foes, they write—if friends, they read me dead.
Seized and tied down to judge, how wretched I!
Who can't be silent, and who will not lie:
To laugh were want of goodness and of grace,
And to be grave exceeds all power of face.
I sit with sad civility, I read
With honest anguish and an aching head;
And drop at last, but in unwilling ears,
This saving counsel, "Keep your piece nine years."
"Nine years!" cries he who, high in Drury Lane,
Lulled by soft zephyrs through the broken pane,
Rhymes ere he wakes, and prints before Term ends,
Obliged by hunger, and request of friends.
"The piece, you think, is incorrect? why, take it,
I'm all submission; what you'd have it, make it."
Three things another's modest wishes bound—
My friendship, and a prologue, and ten pound.

* * * * *

There are, who to my person pay their court:
I cough like *Horace*, and, though lean, am short,
Ammon's great son one shoulder had too high,

ALEXANDER POPE

Such *Ovid's* nose, and "Sir! you have an eye."
Go on, obliging creatures, make me see
All that disgraced my betters met in me.
Say for my comfort, languishing in bed,
"Just so immortal *Maro* held his head":
And when I die, be sure you let me know
Great *Homer* died three thousand years ago.
Why did I write? what sin to me unknown
Dipped me in ink, my parents', or my own?
As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
I lisped in numbers for the numbers came.
I left no calling for this idle trade,
No duty broke, no father disobeyed.
The muse but served to ease some friend, not wife,
To help me through this long disease, my life.

On a Certain Lady at Court

I KNOW a thing that's most uncommon;
(Envy, be silent and attend!)
I know a reasonable woman,
Handsome and witty, yet a friend.

Not warped by passion, awed by rumor;
Not grave through pride, nor gay through folly—
An equal mixture of good-humor
And sensible soft melancholy.

"Has she no faults then (Envy says) Sir?"
Yes, she has one, I must aver:
When all the world conspires to praise her,
The woman's deaf, and does not hear.

ALEXANDER POPE

On Mrs. Corbet

HERE rests a woman, good without pretense,
Blessed with plain reason, and with sober sense:
No conquests she, but o'er herself, desired;
No arts essayed, but not to be admired.
Passion and pride were to her soul unknown,
Convinced that virtue only is our own.
So unaffected, so composed a mind;
So firm, so soft; so strong, yet so refined;
Heaven, as its purest gold, by tortures tried;
The saint sustained it, but the woman died.

From "The Rape of the Lock"

AND now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears—
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.
This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs—the speckled, and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows;
Puffs, powders, patches, bibles, billet-doux.

ALEXANDER POPE

Now awful beauty puts on all its arms:
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
The busy sylphs surround their darling care,
These set the head, and these divide the hair;
Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown;
And Betty's praised for labors not her own. . . .
Fair nymphs and well-dressed youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore;
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose—
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those;
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike;
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth, ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray;
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey:
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

ALEXANDER POPE

The Universal Prayer

DEO OPT. MAX.

"The Universal Prayer" is as simple in utterance as it is large in scope and practical in bearing. The name Jove may be unpleasant to some ears: it is to mine—not because it is the name given their deity by men who had little outward revelation; but because of the associations which the wanton poets, not the good philosophers, have gathered about it. Here let it stand, as Pope meant it, for one of the names of the Unknown God.

FATHER of all! in every age,
In every clime adored—
By saint, by savage, and by sage—
Jehovah, Jove, or Lord!

Thou Great First Cause, least understood,
Who all my sense confined
To know but this: that Thou art good,
And that myself am blind;

Yet gave me, in this dark estate,
To see the good from ill;
And, binding Nature fast in fate,
Left free the human will.

What conscience dictates to be done,
Or warns me not to do,
This teach me more than Hell to shun,
That more than Heaven pursue.

What blessings Thy free bounty gives
Let me not cast away—
For God is paid when man receives:
To enjoy is to obey.

ALEXANDER POPE

Yet not to earth's contracted span
Thy goodness let me bound,
Or think Thee Lord alone of man,
When thousand worlds are round.

Let not this weak, unknowing hand
Presume Thy bolts to throw,
And deal damnation round the land
On each I judge Thy foe.

If I am right, Thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay:
If I am wrong, oh teach my heart
To find that better way.

Save me alike from foolish pride
Or impious discontent,
At aught Thy wisdom has denied,
Or aught Thy goodness lent.

Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.

Mean though I am, not wholly so,
Since quickened by Thy breath;
Oh, lead me, wheresoe'er I go,
Through this day's life or death.

This day be bread and peace my lot:
All else beneath the sun
Thou know'st if best bestowed or not,
And let Thy will be done.

ALEXANDER POPE

To Thee, whose temple is all space,
Whose altar, earth, sea, skies—
One chorus let all being raise!
All nature's incense rise!

A Little Learning Is a Dangerous Thing

FROM "ESSAY ON CRITICISM"

A LITTLE learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:
These shallow draughts intoxicate the brain,
And drinking largely sobers us again.
Fired at first sight with what the Muse imparts,
In fearless youth we tempt the heights of arts,
While from the bounded level of our mind,
Short views we take, nor see the lengths behind;
But more advanced, behold with strange surprise,
New distant scenes of endless science rise!
So pleased at first the towering Alps we try,
Mount o'er the vales, and seem to tread the sky,
The eternal snows appear already past,
And the first clouds and mountains seem the last;
But those attained, we tremble to survey
The growing labors of the lengthened way,
The increasing prospect tires our wandering eyes,
Hills peep o'er hills, and Alps on Alps arise!

ALEXANDER POPE

The Art of Writing
FROM "ESSAY ON CRITICISM"

BUT most by numbers judge a poet's song,
And smooth or rough, with them, is right or
wrong:

In the bright Muse though thousand charms conspire,
Her voice is all these tuneful fools admire;
Who haunt Parnassus but to please their ear,
Not mend their minds; as some to church repair,
Not for the doctrine, but the music there.
These equal syllables alone require,
Though oft the ear the open vowels tire;
While expletives their feeble aid do join,
And ten low words oft creep in one dull line:
While they ring round the same unvaried chimes
With sure returns of still expected rhymes:
Where'er you find 'the cooling western breeze',
In the next line, it 'whispers through the trees':
If crystal streams 'with pleasing murmurs creep',
The reader's threatened, not in vain, with 'sleep':

Then, at the last and only couplet fraught
With some unmeaning thing they call a thought,
A needless Alexandrine ends the song
That, like a wounded snake, drags its slow length along.

* * * * *

True ease in writing comes from art, not chance,
As those move easiest who have learned to dance.

* * * * *

Soft is the strain when zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;

ALEXANDER POPE

But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line too labors, and the words move slow:
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er the unbending corn, and skims along the main.

Addison

FROM "EPISTLE TO DR. ARBUTHNOT"

WERE there one whose fires
True genius kindles, and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease:
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear, like the Turk, no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful, yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise;
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault, and hesitate dislike;
Alike, reserved to blame, or to commend,
A timorous foe, and a suspicious friend:
Dreading even fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato, give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause;
While wits and Templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise—
Who but must laugh, if such a man there be?
Who would not weep, if Atticus were he!

ALEXANDER POPE

*Fragments from Other Poems by
Alexander Pope*

LIKE following life through creatures you dissect,
You lose it in the moment you detect.

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.

Who builds a church to God and not to fame,
Will never mark the marble with his name.

To rest, the cushion and soft dean invite,
Who never mentions hell to ears polite.

Statesman, yet friend to truth! of soul sincere,
In action faithful, and in honor clear;
Who broke no promise, served no private end,
Who gained no title, and who lost no friend.

True wit is Nature to advantage dressed;
What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed.

Waller was smooth; but Dryden taught to join
The varying verse, the full resounding line,
The long majestic march and energy divine.

JAMES THOMSON

SCOTLAND, 1700-1748

THOMSON's *Seasons* was for many years the most popular volume of poetry in England. It was to be found in every home from castle to cottage, and passages from the poem were familiar to every schoolboy. The appreciation of the work was more affectionate than critical. Its great service was to call its generation of readers out of doors and teach them to look on nature with enthusiasm.

I quote from G. H. Mair's *Modern English Literature*: "Thomson wrote two poems respectively in the Spenserian and Miltonic manner, the former *The Castle of Indolence*, the latter *The Seasons*. The Spenserian manner is caught very effectively, but the adoption of the style of *Paradise Lost*, with its allusiveness, circumlocution and weight, removes any freshness *The Seasons* might have had. As it is, hardly anything is directly named; birds are always 'the feathered tribe' and everything else has a similar polite generality for its title. . . . This [the style of *The Seasons*] suited the eighteenth-century reader well, for not understanding Nature herself, he was naturally obliged to read her in translations."

The Nightingale Bereaved

FROM "THE SEASONS"

OFt when, returning with her loaded bill,
The astonished mother finds a vacant nest,
By the hard hand of unrelenting clown
Robbed; to the ground the vain provision falls;

JAMES THOMSON

Her pinions ruffle, and low-drooping scarce
Can bear the mourner to the poplar shade;
Where, all abandoned to despair, she sings
Her sorrows through the night; and on the bough
Sole-sitting, still at every dying fall
Takes up again her lamentable strain
Of winding woe, till, wide around, the woods
Sigh to her song, and with her wail resound.

Domestic Birds

FROM "THE SEASONS"

THE careful hen
Calls all her chirping family around,
Fed and defended by the fearless cock,
Whose breast with ardor flames, as on he walks,
Graceful, and crows defiance. In the pond
The finely checkered duck before her train
Rows garrulous. The stately-sailing swan
Gives out her snowy plumage to the gale;
And arching proud his neck, with oary feet
Bears forward fierce, and guards his osier-isle
Protective of his young. The turkey nigh,
Loud-threatening reddens, while the peacock spreads
His every-colored glory to the sun,
And swims in radiant majesty along.
O'er the whole homely scene, the cooing dove
Flies thick in amorous chase, and wanton rolls
The glancing eye, and turns the changeful neck.

JAMES THOMSON

From "The Castle of Indolence"

Here, for once, Thomson rises to the rich color and poetic luxury found so frequently in "The Faerie Queene" of Spenser.

A PLEASING land of drowsy-head it was,
Of dreams that wave before the half-shut eye;
And of gay castles in the clouds that pass,
For ever flushing round a summer sky.
There eke the soft delights that witchingly
Distil a wanton sweetness through the breast,
And the calm pleasures, always hovered nigh;
But whate'er smacked of noyance or unrest
Was far, far off expelled from this delicious nest. . . .

Behold! ye pilgrims of this earth, behold!
See all but man with unearned pleasure gay:
See her bright robes the butterfly unfold,
Broke from her wintry tomb in prime of May!
What youthful bride can equal her array?
Who can with her for easy pleasure vie?
From mead to mead with gentle wing to stray,
From flower to flower on balmy gales to fly,
Is all she has to do beneath the radiant sky. . . .

Come, ye who still the cumbrous load of life
Push hard up hill; but as the furthest steep
You trust to gain, and put an end to strife,
Down thunders back the stone with mighty sweep,
And hurls your labors to the valleys deep,
For ever vain; come, and, withouten fee,
I, in oblivion will your sorrows steep,
Your cares, your toils, will steep you in a sea
Of full delight: Oh come, ye weary wights, to me!

SAMUEL JOHNSON

ENGLAND, 1709-1784

THE GREAT CHAM OF LITERATURE," as Smollett called Dr. Johnson, wrote comparatively little verse—all of it scholarly and some of it of a fairly high order. We cannot afford to overlook the beautiful epitaph on his friend Levett, and the magnificent statement of his religious tribulations, in *The Vanity of Human Wishes*. Courthope suggests that "Johnson unites in his own style many of the opposite excellences exhibited by his predecessor Pope and his friend Goldsmith." *Rasselas*, his noble poetic performance in prose, was written under great pressure to defray his mother's funeral expenses. His celebrated *Lives of the Poets* remains an authoritative and monumental work of its kind, although the complaint has been made that the author "left out the poets."

One-and-Twenty

LONG-EXPECTED One-and-Twenty,
Lingering year at length is flown:
Pride and pleasure, pomp and plenty,
Great Sir John,¹ are now your own.

Loosened from the minor's tether,
Free to mortgage or to sell,
Wild as wind and light as feather,
Bid the sons of thrift farewell.

Call the Betsies, Kates and Jennies,
All the names that banish care;
Lavish of your grandsire's guineas,
Show the spirit of an heir.

¹ Sir John Lade.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

All that prey on vice and folly
Joy to see their quarry fly:
There's the gamester, light and jolly,
There's the lender, grave and sly.

Wealth, my lad, was made to wander,
Let it wander as it will;
Call the jockey, call the pander,
Bid them come and take their fill.

When the bonny blade carouses,
Pockets full and spirits high—
What are acres? what are houses?
Only dirt, or wet or dry.

Should the guardian friend or mother
Tell the woes of wilful waste,
Scorn their counsel, scorn their pother;
You can hang or drown at last!

Charles XII

ON what foundation stands the warrior's pride,
How just his hopes let Swedish Charles decide.
A frame of adamant, a soul of fire,
No dangers fright him, and no labors tire;
O'er love, o'er fear, extends his wide domain,
Unconquered lord of pleasure and of pain.
No joys to him pacific sceptres yield;
War sounds the trump, he rushes to the field.
Behold surrounding kings their powers combine,
And one capitulate, and one resign:

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Peace courts his hand, but spreads her charms in vain:
"Think nothing gained," he cries, "till naught remain,
On Moscow's walls till Gothic standards fly,
And all be mine beneath the polar sky."

Shakespeare and Jonson

WHEN Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous
foes

First reared the Stage, immortal Shakespeare rose:
Each change of many-colored life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impressed,
And unresisted passion stormed the breast.

Then Jonson came, instructed from the school,
To please in method, and invent by rule:
His studious patience and laborious art,
By regular approach assayed the heart.
Cold approbation gave the lingering bays,
For those who durst not censure, scarce could praise.
A mortal born, he met the general doom,
But left, like Egypt's kings, a lasting tomb.

On the Death of Mr. Robert Levet, a Practiser in Physic

CONDEMNED to Hope's delusive mine,
As on we toil from day to day,
By sudden blasts or slow decline
Our social comforts drop away.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Well tried through many a varying year,
See Levet to the grave descend,
Officious, innocent, sincere,
Of every friendless name the friend.

Yet still he fills affection's eye,
Obscurely wise and coarsely kind;
Nor, lettered Arrogance, deny
Thy praise to merit unrefined.

When fainting nature called for aid,
And hovering death prepared the blow,
His vigorous remedy displayed
The power of art without the show.

In Misery's darkest cavern known,
His useful care was ever nigh,
Where hopeless Anguish poured his groan,
And lonely Want retired to die.

No summons mocked by chill delay,
No petty gain disdained by pride;
The modest wants of every day
The toil of every day supplied.

His virtues walked their narrow round,
Nor made a pause, nor left a void;
And sure the Eternal Master found
The single talent well employed.

The busy day, the peaceful night,
Unfelt, uncounted, glided by:
His frame was firm—his powers were bright,
Though now his eightieth year was nigh.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

Then with no fiery throbbing pain,
No cold gradations of decay,
Death broke at once the vital chain,
And freed his soul the nearest way.

RICHARD JAGO

ENGLAND, 1715-1781

Absence

WITH leaden foot Time creeps along
While Delia is away:
With her, nor plaintive was the song,
Nor tedious was the day.

Ah, envious Power! reverse my doom;
Now double thy career,
Strain every nerve, stretch every plume,
And rest them when she's here!

THOMAS GRAY

ENGLAND, 1716-1771

GRAY was perhaps the most learned man of his time in Europe—a far more industrious reader than writer. His *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*, Walter Savage Landor predicted, “will be read as long as any work of Shakespeare, despite of its moping owl and the tinkettle of an epitaph tied to its tail.” Gray himself believed that the universal popularity of his great *Elegy* was due entirely to the subject and that “the public would have received it as well if it had been written in prose.” Gray also maintained that the *Elegy* was not his best work in poetry, placing above it his odes. Nevertheless, the *Elegy* remains the masterpiece of the *Il Penseroso* school, and has summed up for all English readers, for all time, the poetry of the tomb.

By comparing the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard* with *The Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College* and *The Bard*, one can form an opinion as to whether Gray was a fair appraiser of his own work.

Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard

For more than a century this elegy has kept its place as a masterpiece of English verse. It has the threefold charm of exquisite diction, musical versification, and homely human—sometimes exalted—sentiment. In consenting to its publication the author wrote to Dodsley, the publisher, in 1751: “Print it without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them.” Accordingly, in the early editions it was printed, not in separated, but in continuous stanzas.

THOMAS GRAY

The night before the Battle of Quebec (1759), in which the British, under General James Wolfe, defeated the French under Montcalm, the British commander read this poem aloud to some of his officers, and announced in conclusion: "Gentlemen, I would rather have written those lines than to capture Quebec tomorrow."

THE curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves the turf in many a moldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell for ever laid,
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ply her evening care:
No children run to lisp their sire's return,
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

THOMAS GRAY

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;
How jocund did they drive their team afield!
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys and destiny obscure;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour:
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice provoke the silent dust,
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire—
Hands, that the rod of empire might have swayed,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample page
Rich with the spoils of time did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repressed their noble rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

THOMAS GRAY

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening senates to command,
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read their history in a nation's eyes—

Their lot forbade: nor circumscribed alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confined—
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learned to stray:
Along the cool, sequestered vale of life
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture decked,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

THOMAS GRAY

Their name, their years, spelt by the unlettered Muse,
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resigned,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires:
Even from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the deep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn.

"There at the door of yonder nodding beech
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove,
Now drooping, woeful-wan, like one forlorn,
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love.

THOMAS GRAY

"One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;
Another came; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he:

"The next with dirges due in sad array
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou can'st read) the lay
Graved on the stone beneath yon agèd thorn."

THE EPITAPH

*Here rests his head upon the lap of Earth
A Youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown.
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy marked him for her own.*

*Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send:
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gained from Heaven ('twas all he wished) a
friend.*

*No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose)
The bosom of his Father and his God.*

THOMAS GRAY

The Curse Upon Edward

WEAVE the warp, and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Edward's race.
Give ample room and verge enough
The characters of Hell to trace.
Mark the year, and mark the night,
When Severn shall re-echo with affright
The shrieks of death, through Berkley's roofs that ring,
Shrieks of an agonizing King!
She-wolf of France, with unrelenting fangs,
That tear'st the bowels of thy mangled mate,
From thee be born, who o'er thy country hangs
The scourge of Heaven. What terrors round him wait!
Amazement in his van, with Flight combined,
And Sorrow's faded form, and Solitude behind.

Mighty Victor, mighty Lord!
Low on his funeral couch he lies!
No pitying heart, no eye, afford
A tear to grace his obsequies.
Is the sable warrior fled?
Thy son is gone. He rests among the dead.
The swarm that in thy noon-tide beam were born?
Gone to salute the rising morn.
Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes;
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;
Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey.

Fill high the sparkling bowl,
The rich repast prepare;

THOMAS GRAY

Reft of a crown, he yet may share the feast:
Close by the regal chair
Fell Thirst and Famine scowl
A baleful smile upon their baffled guest.
Heard ye the din of battle bray,
Lance to lance, and horse to horse?
Long years of havoc urge their destined course,
And through the kindred squadrons mow their way.
Ye Towers of Julius, London's lasting shame,
With many a foul and midnight murder fed,
Revere his consort's faith, his father's fame,
And spare the meek usurper's holy head.
Above, below, the rose of snow,
Twined with her blushing foe, we spread:
The bristled boar in infant-gore
Wallows beneath the thorny shade.
Now, brothers, bending o'er the accursèd loom
Stamp we our vengeance deep, and ratify his doom.
Edward, lo! to sudden fate
(Weave we the woof. The thread is spun)
Half of thy heart we consecrate.
(The web is wove. The work is done.)

From "The Progress of Poesy"

A PINDARIC ODE

WOODS that wave o'er Delphi's steep,
Isles that crown the Ægean deep,
Fields that cool Ilissus laves,
Or where Mæander's amber waves
In lingering labyrinths creep,
How do your tuneful echoes languish,
Mute, but to the voice of anguish?

THOMAS GRAY

Where each old poetic mountain
Inspiration breathed around:
Every shade and hallowed fountain
Murmured deep a solemn sound;
Till the sad Nine, in Greece's evil hour,
Left their Parnassus for the Latian plains.
Alike they scorn the pomp of tyrant Power,
And coward Vice that revels in her chains.
When Latium had her lofty spirit lost,
They sought, O Albion! next thy sea-encircled coast.

Far from the sun and summer gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
What time, where lucid Avon strayed,
To Him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face: the dauntless child
Stretched forth his little arms, and smiled.
This pencil take (she said) whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears.

Nor second he, that rode sublime
Upon the seraph-wings of Ecstasy,
The secrets of the abyss to spy.
He passed the flaming bounds of place and time:
The living Throne, the sapphire-blaze,
Where Angels tremble while they gaze,
He saw; but blasted with excess of light,
Closed his eyes in endless night.
Behold, where Dryden's less presumptuous car,
Wide o'er the fields of glory bear

THOMAS GRAY

Two coursers of ethereal race,
With necks in thunder clothed, and long-resounding pace.

Hark, his hands the lyre explore!
Bright-eyed Fancy hovering o'er
Scatters from her pictured urn
Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.
But ah! 'tis heard no more——
O Lyre divine! what daring Spirit
Wakes thee now? Though he inherit
Nor the pride, nor ample pinion,
That the Theban eagle bear
Sailing with supreme dominion
Through the azure deep of air:
Yet oft before his infant eyes would run
Such forms as glitter in the Muses's ray,
With orient hues, unborrowed of the Sun;
Yet shall he mount, and keep his distant way
Beyond the limits of a vulgar fate,
Beneath the Good how far—but far above the Great.

From "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"

AH, happy hills, ah, pleasing shade,
Ah, fields beloved in vain,
Where once my careless childhood strayed
A stranger yet to pain!
I feel the gales that from ye blow,
A momentary bliss bestow,
As waving fresh their gladsome wing,
My weary soul they seem to soothe,
And, redolent of joy and youth,
To breathe a second spring.

THOMAS GRAY

While some, on earnest business bent,
Their murmuring labors ply
'Gainst graver hours that bring constraint
To sweeten liberty:
Some bold adventurers disdain
The limits of their little reign,
And unknown regions dare descry:
Still as they run they look behind,
They hear a voice in every wind,
And snatch a fearful joy.

Alas, regardless of their doom
The little victims play!
No sense have they of ills to come,
Nor care beyond to-day;
Yet see how all around them wait
The ministers of human fate,
And black Misfortune's baleful train!
Ah, show them where in ambush stand
To seize their prey the murderous band!
Ah, tell them, they are men!

To each his sufferings: all are men,
Condemned alike to groan—
The tender for another's pain;
The unfeeling for his own.
Yet, ah! why should they know their fate?
Since sorrow never comes too late,
And happiness too swiftly flies,
Thought would destroy their paradise.
No more; where ignorance is bliss,
'Tis folly to be wise.

WILLIAM COLLINS

ENGLAND, 1721-1759

As a purely lyric poet, William Collins, a contemporary of Thomas Gray, is immensely superior to the more famous author of the *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*. Hence Swinburne's epigram: "The Muse gave birth to Collins; she did but give suck to Gray."

I regard the *Ode to Evening* as one of the finest things of its kind in the language. Read and absorb it, partake of its medicinal property, and the approach of night will possess a grace and meaning that may be new to you. His justly admired *Ode to the Passions* has a more obvious appeal. To Swinburne, great poet himself, "Its grace and vigor, its vivid and pliant dexterity of touch, are worthy of all their long inheritance of praise; and altogether it holds out admirably well to the happy and harmonious end."

Poor, neglected, broken in body and mind, this noble poet died in an insane asylum.

Speaking of Collins and of Thomas Gray, G. H. Mair observes: "They mark a period; they are the first definite break with the classic convention which had been triumphant for upwards of seventy years when their prime came. It is a break, however, in style rather than in essentials, and a reader who seeks in them the inspiring freshness which came later with Wordsworth and Coleridge will be disappointed. . . . They are fastidious and academic; they lack the authentic fire."

WILLIAM COLLINS

How Sleep the Brave

HOW sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest!
When Spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallowed mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than Fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knells is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There Honor comes, a pilgrim grey,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay;
And Freedom shall awhile repair
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

Ode to Evening

This ode is memorable in the fact that it has no rhyme, and yet it has fine phrasal beauty and melodious charm. It is surpassed only by Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears," that most remarkable unrhymed lyric in the world.

IF aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales;

O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in yon western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With brede ethereal wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed:

WILLIAM COLLINS

Now air is hushed, save where the weak-eyed bat
With short shrill shriek flits by on leathern wing,
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

As oft he rises, 'midst the twilight path
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum:
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As, musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return!

For when thy folding-star arising shows
His paly circlet, at his warning lamp
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in buds the day,

And many a nymph who wreathes her brows
And sheds the freshening dew, and, lovelier sun,
The pensive pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car:

Then lead, calm votaress, where some sheeted lake
Cheers the lone heath, or some time-hallowed pile,
Or upland fallows grey
Reflect its last cool gleam.

Or if chill blustering winds, or driving rain,
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side
Views wilds and swelling floods,

WILLIAM COLLINS

And hamlets brown, and dim-discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil.

While Spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve!
While Summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

While fallow Autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes:

So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall Fancy, Friendship, Science, smiling Peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And hymn thy favorite name!

Fidele's Dirge

TO fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the breathing spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove;
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

WILLIAM COLLINS

No withered witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew:
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew;

The redbreast oft, at evening hours,
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss, and gathered flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds, and beating rain,
In tempests shake the sylvan cell,
Or midst the chase, on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
And mourned till Pity's self be dead.

The Passions

AN ODE FOR MUSIC

WHEN Music, heavenly maid, was young,
While yet in early Greece she sung,
The Passions oft, to hear her shell,
Thronged around her magic cell,
Exulting, trembling, raging, fainting,
Possest beyond the Muse's painting:
By turns they felt the glowing mind
Disturbed, delighted, raised, refined;
Till once, 'tis said, when all were fired,
Filled with fury, rapt, inspired,

WILLIAM COLLINS

From the supporting myrtles round
They snatched her instruments of sound;
And, as they oft had heard apart
Sweet lessons of her forceful art,
Each (for madness ruled the hour)
Would prove his own expressive power.

First Fear, his hand, its skill to try,
Amid the chords bewildered laid,
And back recoiled, he knew not why,
Even at the sound himself had made.

Next Anger rushed; his eyes on fire,
In lightnings owned his secret stings:
In one rude clash he struck the lyre,
And swept with hurried hand the strings.

With woful measures wan Despair
Low, sullen sounds his grief beguiled;
A solemn, strange, and mingled air;
'Twas sad by fits, by starts 'twas wild.

But thou, O Hope, with eyes so fair,
What was thy delightful measure?
Still it whispered promised pleasure,
And bade the lovely scenes at distance hail!
Still would her touch the strain prolong;
And from the rocks, the woods, the vale,
She called on Echo still, through all the song;
And, where her sweetest theme she chose,
A soft responsive voice was heard at every close,
And Hope enchanted smiled, and waved her golden
hair.

WILLIAM COLLINS

And longer had she sung—but, with a frown,
Revenge impatient rose:
He threw his blood-stained sword, in thunder, down;
And with a withering look,
The war-denouncing trumpet took,
And blew a blast so loud and dread,
Were ne'er prophetic sounds so full of woe!
And, ever and anon, he beat
The doubling drum, with furious heat;
And though sometimes, each dreary pause between,
Dejected Pity, at his side,
Her soul-subduing voice applied,
Yet still he kept his wild unaltered mien,
While each strained ball of sight seemed bursting
from his head.

Thy numbers, Jealousy, to naught were fixed;
Sad proof of thy distressful state;
Of differing themes the veering song was mixed;
And now it courted Love, now raving called
on Hate.

With eyes upraised, as one inspired,
Pale Melancholy sat retired;
And, from her wild sequestered seat,
In notes by distance made more sweet,
Poured through the mellow horn her pensive soul:
And, dashing soft from rocks around,
Bubbling runnels joined the sound;
Through glades and glooms the mingled measure
stole,
Or, o'er some haunted stream, with fond delay,
Round an holy calm diffusing,
Love of peace, and lonely musing
In hollow murmurs died away.

WILLIAM COLLINS

But oh! how altered was its sprightlier tone,
When Cheerfulness, a nymph of healthiest hue,
Her bow across her shoulder flung,
Her buskins gemmed with morning dew,
Blew an inspiring air, that dale and thicket rung,
The hunter's call, to faun and dryad known!
The oak-crowned sisters, and their chaste-eyed
queen,
Satyrs and sylvan boys, were seen,
Peeping from forth their alleys green:
Brown Exercise rejoiced to hear;
And Sport leapt up, and seized his beechen spear.

Last came Joy's ecstatic trial:
He, with viny crown advancing,
First to the lively pipe his hand addrest;
But soon he saw the brisk awakening viol,
Whose sweet entrancing voice he loved the best;
They would have thought who heard the strain
They saw, in Tempe's vale, her native maids,
Amidst the festal sounding shades,
To some unwearied minstrel dancing,
While, as his flying fingers kissed the strings,
Love framed with Mirth a gay fantastic round:
Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;
And he, amidst his frolic play,
As if he would the charming air repay,
Shook thousand odors from his dewy wings.

O Music! sphere-descended maid,
Friend of Pleasure, Wisdom's aid!
Why, goddess! why, to us denied,
Lay'st thou thy ancient lyre aside
As, in that loved Athenian bower,

WILLIAM COLLINS

You learned an all-commanding power,
Thy mimic soul, O Nymph endeared,
Can well recall what then it heard;
Where is thy native simple heart,
Devote to Virtue, Fancy, Art?
Arise, as in that elder time,
Warm, energetic, chaste, sublime!
Thy wonders, in that godlike age,
Fill thy recording sister's page—
'Tis said, and I believe the tale,
Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this laggard age;
Even all at once together found,
Cecilia's mingled world of sound—
O bid our vain endeavors cease;
Revive the just designs of Greece:
Return in all thy simple state!
Confirm the tales her sons relate!

From "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands"

UNBOUNDED is thy range; with varied style
Thy muse may, like those feathery tribes which
spring

From their rude rocks, extend her skirting wing
Round the moist marge of each cold Hebrid isle,
To that hoar pile which still its ruins shows:
In whose small vaults a pigmy-folk is found,
Whose bones the delver with his spade upthrows,
And culls them, wondering, from the hallowed ground!
Or thither where beneath the showery west

WILLIAM COLLINS

The mighty kings of three fair realms are laid;
Once foes, perhaps, together now they rest.
No slaves revere them and no wars invade;
Yet frequent now, at midnight's solemn hour,
The rifted mounds their yawning cells unfold,
And forth the monarchs stalk with sovereign power
In pageant robes, and wreathed with sheeny gold,
And on their twilight tombs aerial council hold.

MARK AKENSIDE

ENGLAND, 1721-1770

The Virtuoso

HE many a creature did anatomize,
Almost unpeopling water, air and land;
Beasts, fishes, birds, snails, caterpillars, flies,
Were laid full low by his relentless hand,
That oft with gory crimson was distained:
He many a dog destroyed, and many a cat
Of fleas his bed, of frogs the marshes drained,
Could tellen if a mite were lean or fat,
And read a lecture o'er the entrails of a gnat.

CHRISTOPHER SMART

ENGLAND, 1722-1771

GIFTED with a powerful but disordered intellect, this eighteenth-century poet began his career as a London man of letters by publishing *Poems on Several Occasions*, which contained *The Hop Garden*. His mental aberration finally became acute; and during his confinement in an asylum he produced his *Song to David*, which contains a few notable stanzas. The poem, as a whole, is usually praised far beyond its merit. Unfortunate to the last, Smart died in a debtor's prison.

From "A Song to David"

TELL them, I AM, Jehovah said
To Moses; while earth heard in dread,
And, smitten to the heart,
At once above, beneath, around,
All Nature, without voice or sound,
Replied, O LORD, THOU ART.

The world, the clustering spheres, He made;
The glorious light, the soothing shade,
Dale, champaign, grove and hill;
The multitudinous abyss,
Where Secrecy remains in bliss,
And Wisdom hides her skill.

The pillars of the Lord are seven,
Which stand from earth to topmost heaven:
His Wisdom drew the plan:
His Word accomplished the design,
From brightest gem to deepest mine;
From Christ enthroned, to Man. . . .

CHRISTOPHER SMART

Sweet is the dew that falls betimes,
And drops upon the leafy limes,
Sweet Hermon's fragrant air:
Sweet is the lily's silver bell,
And sweet the wakeful tapers' smell
That watch for early prayer.

Sweet the young nurse, with love intense,
Which smiles o'er sleeping innocence;
Sweet, when the lost arrive:
Sweet the musician's ardor beats,
While his vague mind's in quest of sweets,
The choicest flowers to hive.

Strong is the horse upon his speed;
Strong in pursuit the rapid glede,
Which makes at once his game;
Strong the tall ostrich on the ground;
Strong through the turbulent profound
Shoots Xiphias to his aim.

Strong is the lion—like a coal
His eyeball—like a bastion's mole
His chest against the foes:
Strong the gier-eagle on his sail;
Strong against tide the enormous whale
Emerges as he goes.

But stronger still, in earth and air,
And in the sea, the man of prayer,
And far beneath the tide:
And in the seat to fate assigned,
Where ask is have, where seek is find,
Where knock is open wide.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

IRELAND, 1728-1774

NO better beloved poet than Oliver Goldsmith has ever used the English language. Of him, his great contemporary, Samuel Johnson, said, "No man was more foolish when he had not a pen in his hand, or more wise when he had." Goldsmith was perhaps the most charming and versatile writer of the eighteenth century. In character, he was prodigal, but he lavished more on others than he did on himself. His benevolence was always prompt, sometimes whimsical.

It is in *The Deserted Village*, his best known poem, that Goldsmith most fully shows the grace and truthfulness with which he could touch natural scenes. Lissoy, an Irish village known to the poet in his youth, is said to have been the original from which he drew. In the poem, the mill, the brook, the hawthorn tree, the church that crowns the neighboring hill, are all taken straight from the outer world. The features of nature and the works of man, the parsonage, the school house, the ale house—all harmonize in one picture, and though the feeling evoked is one of melancholy, it is wonderfully varied and relieved by the faithfulness of the picture and the kindly humor of the artist. Second among his poems in point of excellence is *The Traveller*, which first brought Goldsmith recognition. His novel, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, still delights the reading world; and his comedy, *She Stoops to Conquer*, still holds the stage.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

From "The Deserted Village"

Here we come upon what is perhaps the finest achievement in the realm of gnomic poetry—philosophy in verse. It surpasses the wisdom poetry of Pope in the fact that it is aglow with a sweeter humanity. In Goldsmith's verse, wisdom comes blowing a pipe with many heart-warm notes.

SWEET Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,
Where health and plenty cheered the laboring swain,
Where smiling spring its earliest visit paid,
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed.
Dear lovely bowers of innocence and ease,
Seats of my youth, when every sport could please,
How often have I loitered o'er thy green,
Where humble happiness endeared each scene!
How often have I paused on every charm—
The sheltered cot, the cultivated farm,
The never-failing brook, the busy mill,
The decent church that topped the neighboring hill,
The hawthorn-bush, with seats beneath the shade,
For talking age and whispering lovers made!
How often have I blessed the coming day,
When toil remitting lent its turn to play,
And all the village train, from labor free,
Led up their sports beneath the spreading tree,
While many a pastime circled in the shade,
The young contending as the old surveyed;
And many a gambol frolicked o'er the ground,
And sleights of art and feats of strength went round;
And still, as each repeated pleasure tired,
Succeeding sports the mirthful band inspired;
The dancing pair, that simply sought renown
By holding out, to tire each other down;

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

The swain, mistrustless of his smutted face,
While secret laughter tittered round the place;
The bashful virgin's sidelong looks of love,
The matron's glance that would those looks reprove:
These were thy charms, sweet village! sports like these,
With sweet succession, taught even toil to please;
These round thy bowers their cheerful influence shed;
These were thy charms—but all these charms are fled.

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay;
Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man:
For him light labor spread her wholesome store—
Just gave what life required, but gave no more;
His best companions, innocence and health;
And his best riches, ignorance of wealth.

But times are altered: trade's unfeeling train
Usurp the land, and dispossess the swain;
Along the lawn, where scattered hamlets rose,
Unwieldy wealth and cumbrous pomp repose;
And every want to luxury allied,
And every pang that folly pays to pride.
Those gentle hours that plenty bade to bloom,
Those calm desires that asked but little room,
Those healthful sports that graced the peaceful scene,
Lived in each look, and brightened all the green—
These, far departing, seek a kinder shore,
And rural mirth and manners are no more.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Sweet was the sound, when oft at evening's close
Up yonder hill the village murmur rose;
There, as I passed with careless steps and slow,
The mingling notes came softened from below:
The swain responsive as the milkmaid sung,
The sober herd that lowed to meet their young,
The noisy geese that gabbled o'er the pool,
The playful children just let loose from school,
The watch-dog's voice that bayed the whispering wind,
And the loud laugh that spoke the vacant mind.
These all in sweet confusion sought the shade,
And filled each pause the nightingale had made.
But now the sounds of population fail;
No cheerful murmurs fluctuate in the gale;
No busy steps the grass-grown footway tread—
But all the bloomy blush of life is fled.
All but one widowed, solitary thing,
That feebly bends beside the plashy spring;
She, wretched matron, forced in age, for bread,
To strip the brook with mantling cresses spread,
To pick her wintry fagot from the thorn,
To seek her nightly shed, and weep till morn—
She only left of all the harmless train,
The sad historian of the pensive plain.

Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden-flower grows wild—
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Nor ever had changed, nor wished to change, his place;
Unskilful he to fawn, or seek for power
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Far other aims his heart had learned to prize—
More bent to raise the wretched than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard, descending, swept his aged breast;
The ruined spendthrift, now no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier, kindly bade to stay,
Sate by his fire, and talked the night away—
Wept o'er his wounds, or, tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guests, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe;
Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
His pity gave ere charity began.

Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side;
But in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And, as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way.

At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran;
Even children followed, with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown, to share the good man's smile.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed;
To them his heart, his love, his griefs, were given—
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head.

Beside yon straggling fence that skirts the way,
With blossomed furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skilled to rule,
The village master taught his little school.
A man severe he was, and stern to view—
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
The day's disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned;
Yet he was kind—or, if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declared how much he knew,
'Twas certain he could write, and cipher too;
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage,
And even the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson owned his skill,
For, even though vanquished, he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thundering sound
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around;
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame; the very spot
Where many a time he triumphed, is forgot.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Ye friends to truth, ye statesmen, who survey
The rich man's joys increase, the poor's decay!
'Tis yours to judge how wide the limits stand
Between a splendid and a happy land.
Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from her shore;
Hoards, even beyond the miser's wish, abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains: this wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same.
Not so the loss: the man of wealth and pride
Takes up a space that many poor supplied—
Space for his lake, his park's extended bounds—
Space for his horses, equipage, and hounds;
The robe that wraps his limbs in silken sloth
Has robbed the neighboring fields of half their growth;
His seat, where solitary sports are seen,
Indignant spurns the cottage from the green;
Around the world each needful product flies,
For all the luxuries the world supplies;
While thus the land, adorned for pleasure all,
In barren splendor, feebly waits the fall.

Where, then, ah! where, shall poverty reside,
To 'scape the pressure of contiguous pride?
If, to some common's fenceless limits strayed,
He drives his flock to pick the scanty blade,
Those fenceless fields the sons of wealth divide,
And even the bare-worn common is denied.
If to the city sped, what waits him there?
To see profusion that he must not share;
To see ten-thousand baneful arts combined
To pamper luxury, and thin mankind;
To see each joy the sons of pleasure know
Extorted from his fellow-creatures' woes.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

Here while the courtier glitters in brocade,
There the pale artist plies his sickly trade;
Here while the proud their long-drawn pomps display,
There the black gibbet glooms beside the way.

And thou, sweet Poetry, thou loveliest maid,
Still first to fly where sensual joys invade—
Unfit, in these degenerate times of shame,
To catch the heart, or strike for honest fame!
Dear, charming nymph, neglected and decried,
My shame in crowds, my solitary pride!
Thou source of all my bliss and all my woe—
That found'st me poor at first, and keep'st me so!
Thou guide, by which the nobler arts excel!
Thou nurse of every virtue—fare thee well!

Elegy on Madam Blaize

GOOD people all, with one accord,
Lament for Madam Blaize;
Who never wanted a good word—
From those who spoke her praise.

The needy seldom passed her door,
And always found her kind;
She freely lent to all the poor—
Who left a pledge behind.

She strove the neighborhood to please
With manner wondrous winning;
And never followed wicked ways—
Unless when she was sinning.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH

At church, in silks and satins new,
With hoop of monstrous size,
She never slumbered in her pew—
But when she shut her eyes.

Her love was sought, I do aver,
By twenty beaux, and more;
The king himself has followed her—
When she has walked before.

But now, her wealth and finery fled,
Her hangers-on cut short all,
Her doctors found, when she was dead—
Her last disorder mortal.

Let us lament, in sorrow sore;
For Kent Street well may say,
That, had she lived a twelvemonth more—
She had not died to-day.

THOMAS PERCY

ENGLAND, 1729-1811

PERCY is best remembered by his great service to English literature in gathering and publishing, in 1765, his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, which did much to kindle interest in ancient British literature and to usher in the revival of Romanticism. This ballad is one of his notable adaptations

The Friar of Orders Gray

IT was a friar of orders gray
Walked forth to tell his beads;
And he met with a lady fair
Clad in a pilgrim's weeds.

"Now Christ thee save, thou reverend friar;
I pray thee tell to me,
If ever at yon holy shrine
My true-love thou didst see."

"And how should I know your true-love
From many another one?"

"O, by his cockle hat and staff,
And by his sandal shoon.

"But chiefly by his face and mien,
That were so fair to view;
His flaxen locks that sweetly curled,
And eyes of lovely blue."

THOMAS PERCY

"O lady, he is dead and gone!
Lady, he's dead and gone!
And at his head a green grass turf,
And at his heels a stone.

"Within these holy cloisters long
He languished, and he died,
Lamenting of a lady's love,
And 'plaining of her pride.

"Here bore him barefaced on his bier
Six proper youths and tall;
And many a tear bedewed his grave
Within yon kirk-yard wall."

"And art thou dead, thou gentle youth?
And art thou dead and gone?
And didst thou die for love of me?
Break, cruel heart of stone!"

"O weep not, lady, weep not so;
Some ghostly comfort seek:
Let not vain sorrow rive thy heart,
Nor tears bedew thy cheek."

"O do not, do not, holy friar,
My sorrow now reprove;
For I have lost the sweetest youth
That e'er won lady's love.

"And now, alas! for thy sad loss
I'll evermore weep and sigh:
For thee I only wished to live,
For thee I wish to die."

THOMAS PERCY

"Weep no more, lady, weep no more,
Thy sorrow is in vain;
For violets plucked, the sweetest showers
Will never make grow again.

"Our joys as wingèd dreams do fly;
Why then should sorrow last?
Since grief but aggravates thy loss,
Grieve not for what is past."

"O say not so, thou holy friar:
I pray thee, say not so;
For since my true-love died for me,
'Tis meet my tears should flow.

"And will he never come again?
Will he never come again?
Ah! no, he is dead and laid in his grave,
Forever to remain.

"His cheek was redder than the rose;
The comeliest youth was he!
But he is dead and laid in his grave:
Alas, and woe is me!"

"Sigh no more, lady, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever:
One foot on sea and one on land,
To one thing constant never.¹

"Hadst thou been fond, he had been false,
And left thee sad and heavy;
For young men ever were fickle found,
Since summer trees were leafy."

¹ Lifted from *Much Ado about Nothing*, Act II.

THOMAS PERCY

"Now say not so, thou holy friar,
I pray thee say not so:
My love he had the truest heart—
O, he was ever true!

"And art thou dead, thou much-loved youth,
And didst thou die for me?
Then farewell home: forevermore
A pilgrim I will be.

"But first upon my true-love's grave
My weary limbs I'll lay;
And thrice I'll kiss the green-grass turf
That wraps his breathless clay."

"Yet stay, fair lady: rest awhile
Beneath this cloister wall:
See through the hawthorn blows the cold wind,
And drizzly rain doth fall."

"O stay me not, thou holy friar,
O stay me not, I pray:
No drizzly rain that falls on me
Can wash my fault away."

"Yet stay, fair lady, turn again,
And dry those pearly tears;
For see, beneath this gown of gray
Thy own true-love appears.

"Here forced by grief and hopeless love,
These holy weeds I sought;
And here, amid these lonely walls,
To end my days I thought.

THOMAS PERCY

"But haply, for my year of grace
Is not yet passed away,
Might I still hope to win thy love,
No longer would I stay."

"Now farewell grief, and welcome joy
Once more unto my heart;
For since I have found thee, lovely youth,
We nevermore will part."

WILLIAM COWPER

ENGLAND, 1731-1800

TEN years after Cowper produced his masterpiece, Robert Burns wrote to a friend: "Is not *The Task* a glorious poem? Its religion, barring a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature; the religion that exalts and ennobles man." About the same time Charles Lamb wrote: "I have been reading *The Task* with fresh delight. I am glad you love Cowper. I could forgive a man for not enjoying Milton; but I could not call that man my friend who should be offended with the 'divine chit-chat of Cowper.'" Greatly as the poem has been admired in the past, it is likely to prove tedious to the modern reader. Yet it gave beautiful and effective expression to the sentiments of a large religious party.

One Lady Austin is said to have been the inspiration of this notable poem. She had often urged Cowper to try his powers in blank verse: at last he promised to do so, if she would give him a subject. "Oh," she replied, "you can never be in want of a subject; you can write upon any. Write upon this sofa." Acting upon the suggestion, the poet produced his masterpiece.

*From "On the Receipt of My Mother's
Picture"*

These lines are full of pathos, and the poet's history confirms all the personal allusions to his own unhappiness. His mind, even in childhood, exhibited that gentleness and diffidence which ripened into such bitter fruit in his after life. Insanity developed, taking the form of religious melancholy.

O H that those lips had language! Life has passed
With me but roughly since I heard thee last.
Those lips are thine—thy own sweet smile I see,
The same that oft in childhood solaced me;
Voice only fails—else how distinct they say
"Grieve not, my child—chase all thy fears away!"
The meek intelligence of those dear eyes—
(Blest be the art that can immortalize:
The art that baffles Time's tyrannic claim
To quench it!)—here shines on me still the same,

Faithful remembrancer of one so dear!
O welcome guest, though unexpected here!
Who bidd'st me honor with an artless song,
Affectionate, a mother lost so long.
I will obey—not willingly alone,
But gladly, as the precept were her own;
And, while that face renews my filial grief,
Fancy shall weave a charm for my relief—
Shall steep me in Elysian reverie:
A momentary dream that thou art she.

My mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son—
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?

WILLIAM COWPER

Perhaps thou gavest me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep in bliss—
Ah, that maternal smile! it answers—Yes.
I heard the bell toll on thy burial-day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
And, turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu!
But was it such? It was. Where thou art gone
Adieus and farewells are a sound unknown:
May I but meet thee on that peaceful shore,
The parting word shall pass my lips no more.
Thy maidens, grieved themselves at my concern,
Oft gave me promise of thy quick return;
What ardently I wished, I long believed,
And, disappointed still, was still deceived—
By expectation every day beguiled,
Dupe of to-morrow even from a child.
Thus many a sad to-morrow came and went,
Till, all my stock of infant sorrows spent,
I learned at last submission to my lot;
But, though I less deplored thee, ne'er forgot.

Could time, his flight reversed, restore the hours,
When, playing with thy vesture's tissued flowers—
The violet, the pink, the jessamine—
I pricked them into paper with a pin,
(And thou wast happier than myself the while—
Wouldst softly speak, and stroke my head and smile)
Could those few pleasant days again appear,
Might one wish bring them, would I wish them here?
I would not trust my heart—the dear delight
Seems so to be desired, perhaps I might.
But no—what here we call our life is such,
So little to be loved, and thou so much,

WILLIAM COWPER

That I should ill requite thee to constrain
Thy unbound spirit into bonds again.

My boast is not that I deduce my birth
From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
But higher far my proud pretensions rise—
The son of parents passed into the skies.
And now, farewell!—Time, unrevoked, has run
His wonted course; yet what I wished is done.
By contemplation's help, not sought in vain,
I seem to have lived my childhood o'er again—
To have renewed the joys that once were mine,
Without the sin of violating thine:
And while the wings of fancy still are free,
And I can view this mimic show of thee,
Time has but half succeeded in his theft,
Thyself removed, thy power to soothe me left.

The Solitude of Alexander Selkirk

In 1704, Alexander Selkirk, a Scotchman, who was sailing-master of an English privateer, was—in consequence of a quarrel with the captain—put ashore, at his own request, on the uninhabited island of Juan Fernandez, which lies about four-hundred miles off the coast of Chili. He was well supplied with clothing, implements and arms, and he remained on the island in solitude over four years, when he was taken off by an English vessel. His story is supposed to have suggested the romance of “Robinson Crusoe.”

I AM monarch of all I survey:
My right there is none to dispute:
From the centre all round to the sea,
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.
O Solitude! where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?

WILLIAM COWPER

Better dwell in the midst of alarms
Than reign in this horrible place.

I am out of humanity's reach;
I must finish my journey alone;
Never hear the sweet music of speech;
I start at the sound of my own.
The beasts that roam over the plain
My form with indifference see:
They are so unacquainted with man,
Their tameness is shocking to me.

Society, friendship and love,
Divinely bestowed upon man,
Oh, had I the wings of a dove,
How soon would I taste you again!
My sorrows I then might assuage
In the ways of religion and truth—
Might learn from the wisdom of age,
And be cheered by the sallies of youth.

Religion! what treasure untold
Resides in that heavenly word!
More precious than silver and gold,
Or all that this earth can afford.
But the sound of the church-going bell
These valleys and rocks never heard,
Never sighed at the sound of a knell,
Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared.

Ye winds, that have made me your sport
Convey to this desolate shore
Some cordial, endearing report
Of a land I shall visit no more:

WILLIAM COWPER

My friends, do they now and then send
A wish or a thought after me?
Oh, tell me I yet have a friend,
Though a friend I am never to see.

How fleet is a glance of the mind!
Compared with the speed of its flight,
The tempest itself lags behind,
And the swift-wingéd arrows of light.
When I think of my own native land,
In a moment I seem to be there;
But, alas! recollection at hand
Soon hurries me back to despair.

But the sea-fowl is gone to her nest,
The beast is laid down in his lair.
Even here is a season of rest,
And I to my cabin repair.
There's mercy in every place;
And mercy (encouraging thought!)
Gives even affliction a grace,
And reconciles man to his lot.

From "Conversation"

THOUGH Nature weigh our talents, and dispense
To every man his modicum of sense,
And conversation, in its better part,
May be esteemed a gift, and not an art;
Yet much depends, as in the tiller's toil,
On culture and the sowing of the soil.
Words learned by rote a parrot may rehearse,
But talking is not always to converse;

WILLIAM COWPER

Not more distinct from harmony divine,
The constant creaking of a country sign.

Ye powers, who rule the tongue—if such there are—
And make colloquial happiness your care,
Preserve me from the thing I dread and hate,
A duel in the form of a debate.
Vociferated logic kills me quite;
A noisy man is always in the right;
I twirl my thumbs, fall back into my chair,
Fix on the wainscot a distressful stare,
And, when I hope his blunders are all out,
Reply discreetly; “To be sure, no doubt!”

Dubius is such a scrupulous, good man;
Yes, you may catch him tripping if you can.
He would not, with a peremptory tone,
Assert the nose upon his face his own:
With hesitation admirably slow,
He humbly *hopes, presumes*, it *may* be so.
His evidence, if he were called by law
To swear to some enormity he saw,
For want of prominence and just relief,
Would hang an honest man, and save a thief.
Through constant dread of giving truth offense,
He ties up all his hearers in suspense;
Knows what he knows as if he knew it not;
What he remembers seems to have forgot;
His sole opinion, whatsoe’er befall,
Centering, at last, in having none at all.

A story, in which native humor reigns,
Is often useful, always entertains:
A graver fact, enlisted on your side,
May furnish illustration, well applied;

WILLIAM COWPER

But sedentary weavers of long tales
Give me the fidgets, and my patience fails.
'Tis the most asinine employ on earth,
To hear them tell of parentage and birth,
And echo conversations, dull and dry,
Embellished with, "He said," and "So said I."
At every interview their route the same,
The repetition makes attention lame:
We bustle up, with unsuccessful speed,
And, in the saddest part, cry, "Droll indeed!"

I pity bashful men, who feel the pain
Of fancied scorn and undeserved disdain,
And bear the marks, upon a blushing face,
Of needless shame, and self-imposed disgrace.
Our sensibilities are so acute,
The fear of being silent makes us mute.
True modesty is a discerning grace,
And only blushes in the proper place;
But counterfeit is blind, and skulks, through fear,
Where 'tis a shame to be ashamed t' appear;
Humility the parent of the first,
The last by vanity produced and nursed.

The circle formed, we sit in silent state,
Like figures drawn upon a dial-plate;
"Yes, ma'am," and "No, ma'am," uttered softly, show,
Every five minutes, how the minutes go:
Each individual, suffering a constraint
Poetry may, but colors cannot paint,
As if in close committee on the sky,
Reports it hot or cold, or wet or dry,
And finds a changing clime a happy source
Of wise reflection and well-timed discourse.
We next inquire, but softly, and by stealth,

WILLIAM COWPER

Like conservators of the public health,
Of epidemic throats, if such there are,
And coughs, and rheums, and phthisics, and catarrh.
That theme exhausted, a wide gap ensues,
Filled up, at last, with interesting news.

And now, let no man charge me that I mean
To clothe in sable every social scene;
To find a medium asks some share of wit,
And therefore 'tis a mark fools never hit.

Heedless Cruelty

FROM "THE TASK"

I WOULD not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polished manners and
fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.
An inadvertent step may crush the snail
That crawls at evening in the public path;
But he that has humanity, forewarned,
Will tread aside, and let the reptile live.
The creeping vermin, loathsome to the sight,
And charged perhaps with venom, that intrudes,
A visitor unwelcome, into scenes
Sacred to neatness and repose, the alcove,
The chamber, or refectory, may die:
A necessary act incurs no blame.
Not so when, held within their proper bounds,
And guiltless of offense, they range the air,
Or take their pastime in the spacious field:

WILLIAM COWPER

There they are privileged; and he that hunts
Or harms them there is guilty of a wrong,
Disturbs the economy of Nature's realm,
Who, when she formed, designed them an abode.
The sum is this: If man's convenience, health,
Or safety interfere, his rights and claims
Are paramount, and must extinguish theirs.
Else they are all—the meanest things that are—
As free to live, and to enjoy that life,
As God was free to form them at the first,
Who in his sovereign wisdom made them all.
Ye, therefore, who love mercy, teach your sons
To love it too.

Boadicea

WHEN the British warrior queen,
Bleeding from the Roman rods,
Sought, with an indignant mien,
Counsel of her country's gods,

Sage beneath the spreading oak
Sat the Druid, hoary chief;
Every burning word he spoke
Full of rage and full of grief:

“Princess! if our agèd eyes
Weep upon thy matchless wrongs,
'Tis because resentment ties
All the terrors of our tongues.

WILLIAM COWPER

"Rome shall perish—write that word
In the blood that she has spilt—
Perish, hopeless and abhorred,
Deep in ruin as in guilt.

"Rome, for empire far renowned,
Tramples on a thousand States;
Soon her pride shall kiss the ground—
Hark! the Gaul is at her gates!

"Other Romans shall arise,
Heedless of a soldier's name;
Sounds, not arms, shall win the prize,
Harmony the path to fame.

"Then the progeny that springs
From the forests of our land,
Armed with thunder, clad with wings,
Shall a wider world command.

"Regions Cæsar never knew
Thy posterity shall sway,
Where his eagles never flew,
None invincible as they."

Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre.

She, with all a monarch's pride,
Felt them in her bosom glow,
Rushed to battle, fought and died—
Dying, hurled them at the foe.

WILLIAM COWPER

Ruffians, pitiless as proud,
Heaven awards the vengeance due;
Empire is on us bestowed,
Shame and ruin wait for you!

JAMES MACPHERSON

SCOTLAND, 1736-1796

MACPHERSON is the alleged translator of the *Poems of Ossian*. Some of his fragments of Gaelic verse were published in 1760, and they excited such keen interest that he was sent to the Highlands to discover more. Out of this exploration sprang the poems—*Fingal* and *Temora*, claimed by Macpherson to be translations. Immediately there was loud debate as to the genuineness of their Gaelic origin. The dispute has not yet been settled, although the weight of opinion is against Macpherson.

From "Poems of Ossian"

AS the dark shades of autumn fly over hills of grass; so gloomy, dark, successive, came the chiefs of Lochlin's echoing woods. Tall as the stag of Morven, moved stately before them the King. His shining shield is on his side, like a flame on the heath at night, when the world is silent and dark, and the traveller sees some ghost sporting in his beam! Dimly gleam the hills around, and show indistinctly their oaks! A blast from the troubled ocean removed the settled mist. The sons of Erin appear like a ridge of rocks on the coast, when mariners on shores unknown are trembling at veering winds!

* * * * *

JAMES MACPHERSON

As a hundred winds on Morven, as the stream of a hundred hills, as clouds fly successive over heaven, as the dark ocean assails the shore of the desert; so roaring, so vast, so terrible, the armies mixed on Lena's echoing heath. The groan of the people spread over the hills: it was like the thunder of night, when the clouds burst on Cona, and a thousand ghosts shriek at once on the hollow wind.

* * * * *

The waves crowd away. They crowd away for fear. They hear the sound of thy coming forth, O sun! Terrible is thy beauty, son of heaven, when death is descending on thy locks, when thou rollest thy vapors before thee over the blasted host. But pleasant is thy beam to the hunter, sitting by the rock in a storm, when thou shewest thyself from the parted cloud, and brightenest his dewy locks: he looks down on the streamy vale and beholds the descent of roes! How long shalt thou rise on war, and roll, a bloody shield, through heaven? I see the deaths of heroes, dark-wandering over thy face!

JOHN WOLCOT

ENGLAND, 1738-1819

THIS poet, better known under the pseudonym of Peter Pindar, was a writer of such audacious satires on all sorts of personages, ranging from George III, Pitt and Boswell down the social scale, that the British Government sought to silence him with a liberal pension. It was declined. Wolcot was a master of burlesque and caricature.

JOHN WOLCOT

The Razor-Seller

A FELLOW in a market town,
Most musical, cried "Razors!" up and down,
And offered twelve for eighteen pence;
Which certainly seemed wondrous cheap,
And, for the money, quite a heap,
As every man should buy, with cash and sense.

A country bumpkin the great offer heard—
Poor Hodge, who suffered by a thick black beard,
That seemed a shoe-brush stuck beneath his nose:
With cheerfulness the eighteen pence he paid,
And proudly to himself in whispers said,
"This rascal stole the razors, I suppose!

"No matter if the fellow be a knave,
Provided that the razors shave;
It *sartinly* will be a monstrous prize."
So home the clown, with his good fortune, went
Smiling, in heart and soul content,
And quickly soaped himself to ears and eyes.

Being well lathered from a dish or tub,
Hodge now began with grinning pain to grub,
Just like a hedger cutting furze;
'Twas a vile razor!—then the rest he tried—
All were impostors. "Ah!" Hodge sighed,
"I wish my eighteen pence were in my purse."

In vain, to chase his beard, and bring the graces,
He cut, and dug, and winced, and stamped, and swore;
Brought blood, and danced, blasphemed, and made wry
faces,
And cursed each razor's body o'er and o'er:

JOHN WOLCOT

His muzzle, formed of opposition stuff,
Firm as a Foxite, would not lose its ruff;
So kept it—laughing at the steel and suds.
Hodge, in a passion, stretched his angry jaws,
Vowing the direst vengeance, with clenched claws,
On the vile cheat that sold the goods.
“Razors! a base, confounded dog!
Not fit to scrape a hog!”

Hodge sought the fellow—found him—and begun:
“P’rhaps, Master Razor-rogue, to you ’tis fun
That people flay themselves out of their lives.
You rascal! for an hour have I been grubbing
Giving my whiskers here a scrubbing,
With razors just like oyster-knives.
Sirrah! I tell you you’re a knave,
To cry up razors that can’t shave!”

“Friend,” quoth the razor-man, “I’m not a knave;
As for the razors you have bought,
Upon my soul, I never thought
That they would shave.”
“Not think they’d *shave!*” quoth Hodge, with wonder-
ing eyes,
And voice not much unlike an Indian yell;
“What were they made for, then, you dog?” he cries.
“*Made,*” quoth the fellow, with a smile—“*to sell.*”

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

ENGLAND, 1743-1825

L EIGH HUNT records that the great English statesman-orator, Charles James Fox, was so impressed with the poetry of Anna Letitia Barbauld that "he had got her songs by heart," and that "this was an applause worth having."

Life

L IFE! I know not what thou art,
But know that thou and I must part;
And when, or how, or where we met,
I own to me's a secret yet.
But this I know, when thou art fled,
Where'er they lay these limbs, this head,
No clod so valueless shall be
As all that then remains of me.

O whither, whither dost thou fly?
Where bend unseen thy trackless course?
And in this strange divorce,
Ah, tell where I must seek this compound I?
To the vast ocean of empyreal flame
From whence thy essence came
Dost thou thy flight pursue, when freed
From matter's base encumbering weed?
Or dost thou, hid from sight,
Wait, like some spell-bound knight,
Through blank oblivious years the appointed hour
To break thy trance and reassume thy power?
Yet canst thou without thought or feeling be?
O say, what art thou, when no more thou'rt thee?

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

Life! we have been long together,
Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;—
Then steal away, give little warning,
Choose thine own time;
Say not Good-night, but in some brighter clime
Bid me Good-morning!

From "A Summer Evening's Meditation"

Now and then, in this poem, the poet rises toward the high level of Milton. The two concluding lines are sublime.

'TIS past! the sultry tyrant of the south
Has spent his short-lived rage: more grateful hours
Move silent on: the skies no more repel
The dazzled sight, but, with mild maiden beams
Of tempered light, invite the cherished eve
To wander o'er their sphere; where hung aloft
Dian's bright crescent, "like a silver bow
New strung in heaven," lifts high its beamy horns,
Impatient for the night, and seems to push
Her brother down the sky. Fair Venus shines,
Even in the eye of day; with sweetest beam
Propitious shines, and shakes a trembling flood
Of softened radiance from her dewy locks.
The shadows spread apace; while meekened Eve,
Her cheek yet warm with blushes, slow retires
Through the Hesperian gardens of the west,
And shuts the gates of day. 'Tis now the hour

ANNA LETITIA BARBAULD

When Contemplation, from her sunless haunts,
The cool damp grotto, or the lonely depth
Of unpierced woods, where wrapt in solid shade
She mused away the gaudy hours of noon,
And, fed on thoughts unripened by the sun,
Moves forward; and with radiant finger points
To yon blue concave swelled by breath divine,
Where, one by one, the living eyes of heaven
Awake, quick kindling o'er the face of ether
One boundless blaze; ten thousand trembling fires,
And dancing lustres, where the unsteady eye,
Restless and dazzled, wanders unconfined
O'er all this field of glories: spacious field,
And worthy of the master: he whose hand,
With hieroglyphics elder than the Nile,
Inscribed the mystic tablet; hung on high
To public gaze, and said, "Adore, O man,
The finger of thy God!" From what pure wells
Of milky light, what soft o'erflowing urn,
Are all these lamps so filled? these friendly lamps
For ever streaming o'er the azure deep
To point our path, and light us to our home.
How soft they slide along their lucid spheres!
And, silent as the foot of time, fulfil
Their destined course! Nature's self is hushed,
And, but a scattered leaf, which rustles through
The thick-wove foliage, not a sound is heard
To break the midnight air; though the raised ear,
Intensely listening, drinks in every breath.
How deep the silence, yet how loud the praise!
But are they silent all? or is there not
A tongue in every star that talks with man,
And woos him to be wise? nor woos in vain:
THIS DEAD OF MIDNIGHT IS THE NOON OF THOUGHT,
AND WISDOM MOUNTS HER ZENITH WITH THE STARS.

SIR WILLIAM JONES

ENGLAND, 1746-1794

The Baby

ON parent knees, a naked new-born child,
Weeping thou sat'st when all around thee
smiled:

So live, that, sinking to thy last long sleep,
Thou then mayst smile while all around thee weep.

What Constitutes a State?

WHAT constitutes a State?
Not high-raised battlement or labored mound,
Thick wall or moated gate—
Not cities proud with spires and turrets crowned—
Not bays and broad-armed ports,
Where, laughing at the storm, rich navies ride—
Not starred and spangled courts,
Where low-browed baseness wafts perfume to pride.
No; men, high-minded men,
With powers as far above dull brutes endued
In forest, brake or den,
As beasts excel cold rocks and brambles rude;
Men who their duties know,
But know their rights, and, knowing, dare maintain,
Prevent the long-aimed blow,
And crush the tyrant while they rend the chain—
These constitute a State:

SIR WILLIAM JONES

And sovereign Law, that State's collected will,
O'er thrones and globes elate
Sits empress, crowning good, repressing ill.
Smit by her sacred frown,
The fiend, Dissension, like a vapor sinks;
And even the all-dazzling crown
Hides his faint rays, and at her bidding shrinks.
Such was this heaven-loved isle,
Than Lesbos fairer, and the Cretan shore!
No more shall freedom smile?
Shall Britons languish, and be men no more?
Since all must life resign,
Those sweet rewards which decorate the brave
'Tis folly to decline,
And steal inglorious to the silent grave.

JOHN LOGAN
SCOTLAND, 1748-1788

To the Cuckoo

HAIL, beauteous stranger of the grove!
Thou messenger of Spring!
Now Heaven repairs thy rural seat,
And woods thy welcome ring.

What time the daisy decks the green,
Thy certain voice we hear:
Hast thou a star to guide thy path,
Or mark the rolling year?

JOHN LOGAN

Delightful visitant! with thee
I hail the time of flowers
And hear the sound of music sweet
From birds among the bowers.

The school-boy, wandering through the wood
To pull the primrose gay,
Starts, the new voice of Spring to hear,
And imitates thy lay.

What time the pea puts on the bloom,
Thou flyest thy vocal vale,
An annual guest in other lands,
Another Spring to hail.

Sweet bird! thy bower is ever green,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No Winter in thy year!

O could I fly, I'd fly with thee!
We'd make, with joyful wing,
Our annual visit o'er the globe,
Companions of the Spring.

LADY ANNE LINDSAY

SCOTLAND, 1750-1825

Auld Robin Gray

Leigh Hunt calls this "the most pathetic ballad ever written." According to our modern ideas, Jennie drew down her sorrows upon herself.

WHEN the sheep are in the fauld, and the kye at
hame,
And a' the wald to rest are gane,
The waes o' my heart fa' in showers frae my e'e,
While my gudeman lies sound by me.

Young Jamie lo'ed me weel, and sought me for his bride;
But saving a croun he had naething else beside:
To make the croun a pund, young Jamie gaed to sea;
And the croun and the pund were baith for me.

He hadna been awa' a week but only twa,
When my father brak his arm, and the cow was stown
awa';
My mother she fell sick,—and my Jamie at the sea—
And auld Robin Gray came a-courtin' me.

My father couldna work, and my mother couldna
spin;
I toiled day and night, but their bread I couldna win;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his
e'e
Said, "Jennie, for their sakes, O, marry me!"

LADY ANNE LINDSAY

My heart it said nay: I looked for Jamie back,
But the wind it blew high and the ship it was a wrack.
His ship it was a wrack—Why didna Jamie dee?
Or why do I live to cry, "Wae's me!"

My father urged me sair: my mother didna speak,
But she looked in my face till my heart was like to
break.

They gi'ed him my hand, though my heart was in the
sea;

Sae auld Robin Gray he was gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When mournfu' as I sat on the stane at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith—for I couldna think it he,
Till he said, "I'm come hame to marry thee."

O sair, sair did we greet, and muckle did we say:
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away.
I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to dee;
And why was I born to say, "Wae's me!"

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin:
I daurna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin.
But I'll do my best a gude wife aye to be,
For auld Robin Gray he is kind unto me.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

ENGLAND, 1752-1770

THIS poet, who died at eighteen, has long been acclaimed a prodigy of genius. Thomas Warton, an eighteenth century critic, was of the enthusiastic opinion that young Chatterton "would have proved the first of English poets, had he reached a maturer age." In his sonnet on *Resolution and Independence*, Wordsworth sings:

"I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride,"

referring to a habit the youth had of turning night into day and to the fact that he was pushed to suicide by starvation because he would not accept charity. Another and greater English critic, William Hazlitt, "cannot find in Chatterton's works anything so extraordinary as the age at which they were written. They have a facility, vigor and knowledge which were prodigious in a boy of sixteen, but which would not have been so in a man of twenty. Nor do I believe he would have written better had he lived. . . . He had done his best; and, like another Empedocles, threw himself into Etna, to ensure immortality." Here are specimens of his work, notably of the celebrated Rowley poems written by Chatterton, but attributed by him to a mythical Thomas Rowley, a priest of the fifteenth century.

You should not fail to read the fine sonnet on Chatterton by Dante Rossetti—to be found on a later page.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

The Minstrel's Roundelay

FROM "ÆLLA"

The fine madness that was in Chatterton (it attracted the notice of William Blake) is seen in its noblest frenzy in this remarkable song.

O SING unto my roundelay,
O drop the briny tear with me;
Dance no more at holyday,
Like a running river be:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Black his cryne¹ as the winter night,
White his rode² as the summer snow,
Red his face as the morning light,
Cold he lies in the grave below:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout;
O he lies by the willow-tree!
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Hark! the raven flaps his wing
In the briered dell below;

¹ cryne] hair.

² rode] complexion.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Hark! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares, as they go:

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

See! the white moon shines on high;
Whiter is my true-love's shroud:
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud:

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true-love's grave
Shall the barren flowers be laid;
Not one holy saint to save
All the coldness of a maid:

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

With my hands I'll dent¹ the briers
Round his holy corse to gre:²
Ouph³ and fairy, light your fires,
Here my body still shall be:

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

Come, with acorn-cup and thorn,
Drain my heartës blood away;

¹ dent] fasten.

² gre] grow.

³ ouph] elf.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Life and all its good I scorn,
Dance by night, or feast by day:
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed
All under the willow-tree.

An Excellent Ballad of Charity

IN Virginë the sultry Sun 'gan sheene
And hot upon the meads did cast his ray:
The apple ruddied from its paly green,
And the soft pear did bend the leafy spray;
The pied chelándry¹ sang the livelong day:
'Twas now the pride, the manhood of the year,
And eke the ground was dight in its most deft aumere.²

The sun was gleaming in the mid of day,
Dead still the air and eke the welkin blue,
When from the sea arist in drear array
A heap of clouds of sable sullen hue,
The which full fast unto the woodland drew,
Hiding at once the Sunnè's festive face;
And the black tempest swelled and gathered up apace.

Beneath an holm, fast by a pathway side
Which did unto Saint Godwyn's convent lead,
A hapless pilgrim moaning did abide,
Poor in his view, ungentle in his weed,
Long breast-full of the miseries of need.
Where from the hailstorm could the beggar fly?
He had no housen there, nor any convent nigh.

¹ Goldfinch.

² Used by Chatterton as 'mantle.'

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Look in his gloomèd face; his sprite there scan,
How woe-begone, how withered, sapless, dead!
Haste to thy church-glebe-house, accursèd man,
Haste to thy coffin, thy sole slumbering-bed¹!
Cold as the clay which will grow on thy head
Are Charity and Love among high elves;
The Knights and Barons live for pleasure and them-
selves

The gathered storm is ripe; the big drops fall;
The sunburnt meadows smoke and drink the rain;
The coming ghastness doth the cattle appal,
And the full flocks are driving o'er the plain;
Dashed from the clouds, the waters gush² again;
The welkin opes, the yellow levin flies,
And the hot fiery stream in the wide flame-lowe³ dies.

List! now the thunder's rattling clamoring⁴ sound
Moves slowly on, and then upswollen clangs,
Shakes the high spire, and lost, dispended, drowned,
Still on the affrighted ear of terror hangs;
The winds are up; the lofty elm-tree swangs;
Again the levin and the thunder pours,
And the full clouds are burst at once in stormy showers.

Spurring his palfrey o'er the watery plain,
The Abbot of Saint Godwyn's convent came;
His chapournette was drenchèd with the rain,

¹ 'Dortoure bedde. 'Dourtoure, a sleeping room.'—*Chatterton*.

² Here Chatterton's text-word is 'flott,' and his gloss 'fly.'
'Gush' seems more appropriate.

³ 'lowings'—flames—*Chatterton*.

⁴ 'Clymmynge,' noisy.—*Chatterton*. 'Clamouring' is adopted as nearer in sound to his text-word.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

His painted girdle met with mickle shame;
He backwards¹ told his bederoll at the same.
The storm increasèd, and he drew aside,
With the poor alms-craver near to the holm to bide.

His cope was all of Lincoln cloth so fine,
With a gold button fastened near his chin;
His autremete² was edged with golden twine,
And his peaked shoe a lordling's might have been;
Full well it showed he counted cost no sin:
The trammels of the palfrey pleased his sight,
For the horse-milliner³ his head with roses dight.

"An alms, Sir Priest!" the drooping pilgrim said,
"O let me wait within your convent-door
Till the sun shineth high above our head
And the loud tempest of the air is o'er.
Helpless and old am I, alas! and poor:
No house, nor friend, nor money in my pouch;
All that I call my own is this my silver crouch."⁴

"Varlet," replied the Abbot, "cease your din;
This is no season alms and prayers to give;
My porter never lets a beggar in;
None touch my ring who not in honor live."
And now the sun with the black clouds did strive,
And shot upon the ground his glaring ray:
The Abbot spurred his steed, and eftsoons rode away.

¹ 'To signify cursing.'—*Chatterton*.

² 'A loose white robe worn by priests.'—*Chatterton*.

³ Steevens, being in Bristol in 1776, saw 'horse-milliner' inscribed over a shop door, outside which stood a wooden horse decked with ribbons.

⁴ 'Cross, crucifix.'—*Chatterton*.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Once more the sky was black, the thunder rolled:
Fast running o'er the plain a priest was seen,
Not dight full proud nor buttoned up in gold;
His cope and jape¹ were grey, and eke were clean;
A Limitour² he was, of order seen;
And from the pathway side then turnèd he,
Where the poor beggar lay beneath the holmen tree.

"An alms, Sir Priest," the drooping pilgrim said,
"For sweet Saint Mary and your order's sake!"
The Limitour then loosened his pouch-thread
And did thereout a groat of silver take;
The needy pilgrim did for gladness shake.
"Here, take this silver, it may ease thy care;
We are God's stewards all—nought of our own we
bear.

"But ah! unhappy pilgrim, learn of me,
Scarce any give a rentroll to their Lord:
Here, take my semicope—thou'rt bare, I see;
'Tis thine; the Saints will give me my reward!"
He left the pilgrim and his way aborde.³
Virgin and holy Saints who sit in gloure,⁴
Or give the mighty will, or give the good man power!

¹ A short surplice worn by friars of inferior class.—*Chatterton*.

² A licensed begging friar.—*Chatterton*.

³ 'Went on.'—*Chatterton*.

⁴ 'Glory.'—*Chatterton*.

THOMAS CHATTERTON

Last Verses

FAREWELL, Bristolia's dingy pile of brick,
Lovers of Mammon, worshippers of trick!
Ye spurned the boy who gave you antique lays,
And paid for learning with your empty praise.
Farewell, ye guzzling aldermanic fools,
By nature fitted for corruption's tools!
I go to where celestial anthems swell;
But you, when you depart, will sink to hell.
Farewell, my mother!—cease, my anguished soul,
Nor let distraction's billows o'er me roll!
Have mercy, Heaven! when here I cease to live,
And this last act of wretchedness forgive.

GEORGE CRABBE

ENGLAND, 1754-1832

CRABBE has been called "the poet of the poor." He describes in simple but vivid verse their struggles, sorrows, weaknesses, crimes and pleasures, sometimes with racy humor, oftener in somber hues. His pathos, sparingly introduced, goes to the heart; his pictures of crime and despair not infrequently rise to the terrific. Crabbe was a realist, who in his day and age was to English poetry what Emile Zola is to French prose fiction. Coleridge found in Crabbe "an absolute defect of the high imagination"; yet admits that "he has much power of a certain kind." Arthur Symons says: "Crabbe did, indeed, do something which was out of fashion then: he took nature fearlessly at first hand, and set down what he saw as he saw it, and so he was a liberating influence."

GEORGE CRABBE

Coleridge is right: Crabbe had "an absolute defect of the high imagination": he had eyes but saw not. He did not see any injustice working havoc in the old competitive struggle. He never looked into the causes of poverty. There is nothing revolutionary in his spirit—nothing of social vision that touched the souls of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the vision that was a constant light in the soul of Shelley. Crabbe could not have understood for a moment the Shelleyan cry to the toiling and exploited millions:

"Men of England, wherefore plow
For the lords that lay ye low?"

The Parish Workhouse

FROM "THE VILLAGE"

THEIRS is yon house that holds the village poor,
Whose walls of mud scarce bear the broken door—
There, where the putrid vapors flagging, play,
And the dull wheel hums doleful through the day.
There children dwell who know no parents' care;
Parents, who know no children's love, dwell there;
Heart-broken matrons on their joyless bed,
Forsaken wives and mothers never wed,
Dejected widows with unheeded tears,
And crippled age with more than childhood fears;
The lame, the blind, and, far the happiest they!
The moping idiot and the madman gay. . . .

Say ye, oppressed by some fantastic woes,
Some jarring nerve that baffles your repose;
Who press the downy couch, while slaves advance
With timid eye, to read the distant glance;
Who with sad prayers the weary doctor tease,
To name the nameless ever-new disease;

GEORGE CRABBE

Who with mock patience dire complaints endure,
Which real pain and that alone can cure;
How would ye bear in real pain to lie,
Despised, neglected, left alone to die?
How would ye bear to draw your latest breath
Where all that's wretched pave the way for death?

"Age, with Stealing Steps . . ."

FROM "TALES OF THE HALL"

SIX years had passed, and forty ere the six,
When time began to play his usual tricks;
The locks once comely in a virgin's sight,
Locks of pure brown, displayed the encroaching white;
The blood, once fervid, now to cool began,
And Time's strong pressure to subdue the man.
I rode or walked as I was wont before.
But now the bounding spirit was no more;
A moderate pace would now my body heat;
A walk of moderate length distress my feet.
I showed my stranger guest those hills sublime,
But said, "The view is poor; we need not climb."

At a friend's mansion I began to dread
The cold neat parlor and the gay glazed bed:
At home I felt a more decided taste,
And must have all things in my order placed.
I ceased to hunt; my horses pleased me less—
My dinner more; I learned to play at chess.
I took my dog and gun, but saw the brute
Was disappointed that I did not shoot.
My morning walks I now could bear to lose,
And blessed the shower that gave me not to choose:

GEORGE CRABBE

In fact, I felt a languor stealing on;
The active arm, the agile hand, were gone;
Small daily actions into habits grew,
And new dislike to forms and fashions new.
I loved my trees in order to dispose;
I numbered peaches, looked how stocks arose;
Told the same story oft—in short, began to prose.

WILLIAM MARSDEN

ENGLAND, 1754-1836?

What Is Time?

I ASKED an aged man, with hoary hairs,
Wrinkled and curved with worldly cares:
"Time is the warp of life," said he; "O tell
The young, the fair, the gay, to weave it well!"
I asked the ancient, venerable dead,
Sages who wrote, and warriors who bled:
From the cold grave a hollow murmur flowed,
"Time sowed the seed we reap in this abode!"
I asked a dying sinner, ere the tide
Of life had left his veins: "Time!" he replied;
"I've lost it! ah, the treasure!" and he died.
I asked the golden sun and silver spheres,
Those bright chronometers of days and years:
They answered, "Time is but a meteor glare,"
And bade me for eternity prepare.
I asked the Seasons, in their annual round,
Which beautify or desolate the ground;
And they replied (no oracle more wise)
"'Tis Folly's blank, and Wisdom's highest prize!"

WILLIAM MARSDEN

I asked a spirit lost—but O the shriek
That pierced my soul! I shudder while I speak.
It cried, "A particle! a speck! a mite
Of endless years, duration infinite!"

Of things inanimate my dial I
Consulted, and it made me this reply:
"Time is the season fair of living well,
The path of glory or the path of hell."
I asked my Bible, and methinks it said,
"Time is the present hour, the past has fled;
Live! live to-day! to-morrow never yet
On any human being rose or set."
I asked old Father Time himself at last;
But in a moment he flew swiftly past:
His chariot was a cloud, the viewless wind
His noiseless steeds, which left no trace behind.
I asked the mighty angel who shall stand
One foot on sea and one on solid land:
"Mortal!" he cried, "the mystery now is o'er;
Time was, Time is, but Time shall be no more!"

WILLIAM BLAKE

ENGLAND, 1757-1827

OF this great mystic poet-painter, Swinburne acutely observes: "No man so poor and so obscure as Blake appeared in the eyes of his generation ever did more good works in a more noble and simple spirit." Although, as Swinburne says, Blake was not generally recognized nor his genius appreciated in his own lifetime, no less a contemporary than Charles Lamb wrote in a letter to the Quaker poet Bernard Barton, in 1824: "Blake is a real name, I assure you, and a most extraordinary man, if he be still living. He is the William Blake, whose wild designs accompany a splendid folio edition of the *Night Thoughts*. . . . He has *seen* the old Welsh bards on Snowdon—he has seen the Beautifullest, the Strongest and the Ugliest Man, left alone from the Massacre of the Britons by the Romans, and has painted them from memory. . . . The man is flown, whither I know not—to Hades or a Mad House. But I must look on him as one of the most extraordinary persons of the age."

As a rule, the poems of Blake treat of the most ordinary subjects; but suddenly a deeper note, an allusion to hidden sufferings and wounds, reveals that we are not in the presence of a shepherd who pipes, but of a prophet who knows. His *Songs of Innocence*, on infancy and first motherhood, and on subjects like *The Lamb*, are all but unrivalled in our language for simplicity, tenderness and joy. His *Songs of Experience* give the reverse side of the *Songs of Innocence*; and they see the evil of the world as a child with a man's heart would see it—with exaggerated horror. I esteem *The Tiger* as one of the master lyrics of the language.

WILLIAM BLAKE

At the house of the Rev. Henry Mathew, in Rathborne Place, London, Blake would sometimes recite his verses, sometimes sing them. His first volume, *Poetical Sketches*, appeared in 1783: this marked an epoch in English poetry. He published his poems with his own illustrations. *Songs of Innocence*, combining verse and illustration, made 1787 memorable for all time. Into an age of feeble poetic style, Blake flung forth this volume of fresh immortal beauty. The same year, he enriched the world with *The Book of Thel*, a work of mystic twilight, and this was followed in 1790 by that strange scripture, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. Then came the Prophetic Books filled with fire and darkness. Finally, in 1794, we reach *Songs of Experience*, which closed his lyric utterance, except for more prophetic pages. But the pictures continued to come in profusion, many of them bearing witness to the sublimity of his greatness.

We may look to his *Songs of Innocence*, to his illustrations for Blair's *Grave*, and particularly to his illustrations for *The Book of Job* for high examples of his creative powers. We note in Blake's work an inclination to translate ideas into images—to find for each thought a sensuous form. This procedure is more serviceable in graphic art than in poetry. Blake has the power to seize the startling aspect of ideas, whether they be simple or sublime. To know Blake you must know both his mysticism and his mythology.

To the Muses

WHETHER on Ida's shady brow
Or in the chambers of the East,
The chambers of the Sun, that now
From ancient melody have ceased;

WILLIAM BLAKE

Whether in heaven ye wander fair,
Or the green corners of the earth,
Or the blue regions of the air
Where the melodious winds have birth;

Whether on crystal rocks ye rove,
Beneath the bosom of the sea,
Wandering in many a coral grove;
Fair Nine, forsaking Poetry;

How have you left the ancient love
That bards of old enjoyed in you!
The languid strings do scarcely move,
The sound is forced, the notes are few.

Reeds of Innocence

PIPING down the valleys wild,
Piping songs of pleasant glee,
On a cloud I saw a child,
And he laughing said to me:

"Pipe a song about a Lamb!"
So I piped with merry cheer.
"Piper, pipe that song again,"
So I piped: he wept to hear.

"Drop thy pipe, thy happy pipe;
Sing thy songs of happy cheer!"
So I sung the same again,
While he wept with joy to hear.

WILLIAM BLAKE

"Piper, sit thee down and write
In a book that all may read."
So he vanished from my sight;
And I plucked a hollow reed,

And I made a rural pen,
And I stained the water clear,
And I wrote my happy songs
Every child may joy to hear.

Infant Joy

I HAVE no name
I am but two days old."
What shall I call thee?
"I happy am,
Joy is my name,"
Sweet joy befall thee!

Pretty Joy
Sweet Joy, but two days old.
Sweet Joy I call thee:
Thou dost smile,
I sing the while,
Sweet joy befall thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Chimney Sweeper

WHEN my mother died I was very young,
And my father sold me while yet my tongue
Could scarcely cry, "'Weep! 'weep! 'weep! 'weep!"
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.

There's little Tom Dacre, who cried when his head,
That curled like a lamb's back, was shaved: so I said
"Hush, Tom! never mind it, for, when your head's bare
You know that the soot cannot spoil your white hair."

And so he was quiet, and that very night,
As Tom was a-sleeping, he had such a sight!—
That thousands of sweepers, Dick, Joe, Ned and Jack,
Were all of them locked up in coffins of black.

And by came an Angel, who had a bright key,
And he opened the coffins and set them all free;
Then down a green plain leaping, laughing, they run,
And wash in a river, and shine in the sun.

Then naked and white, all their bags left behind,
They rise upon clouds and sport in the wind;
And the Angel told Tom, if he'd be a good boy,
He'd have God for his father, and never want joy.

And so Tom awoke; and we rose in the dark,
And got with our bags and our brushes to work.
Though the morning was cold, Tom was happy and
warm;
So if all do their duty, they need not fear harm.

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Little Black Boy

MY mother bore me in the southern wild,
And I am black, but O, my soul is white!
White as an angel is the English child,
But I am black, as if bereaved of light.

My mother taught me underneath a tree,
And, sitting down before the heat of day,
She took me on her lap and kissèd me,
And, pointing to the East, began to say:

"Look at the rising sun: there God does live,
And gives His light, and gives His heat away,
And flowers and trees and beasts and men receive
Comfort in morning, joy in the noonday.

"And we are put on earth a little space,
That we may learn to bear the beams of love;
And these black bodies and this sunburnt face
Are but a cloud, and like a shady grove.

"For when our souls have learned the heat to bear,
The cloud will vanish, we shall hear His voice,
Saying, 'Come out from the grove, my love and care,
And round my golden tent like lambs rejoice.'"

Thus did my mother say, and kissèd me,
And thus I say to little English boy.
When I from black and he from white cloud free,
And round the tent of God like lambs we joy,

WILLIAM BLAKE

I'll shade him from the heat till he can bear
To lean in joy upon our Father's knee;
And then I'll stand and stroke his silver hair,
And be like him, and he will then love me.

The Lamb

LITTLE lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?
Gave thee life, and bade thee feed
By the stream and o'er the mead;
Gave thee clothing of delight,
Softest clothing, woolly, bright;
Gave thee such a tender voice,
Making all the vales rejoice?
Little lamb, who made thee?
Dost thou know who made thee?

Little lamb, I'll tell thee;
Little lamb, I'll tell thee:
He is callèd by thy name,
For He calls himself a Lamb.
He is meek, and He is mild,
He became a little child.
I a child and thou a lamb,
We are callèd by His name.
Little lamb, God bless thee!
Little lamb, God bless thee!

WILLIAM BLAKE

The Tiger

TIGER, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder and what art
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And, when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

WILLIAM BLAKE

Night

THE sun descending in the west,
The evening star does shine;
The birds are silent in their nest,
And I must seek for mine.
The moon, like a flower
In heaven's high bower,
With silent delight
Sits and smiles on the night.

Farewell, green fields and happy grove,
Where flocks have took delight:
Where lambs have nibbled, silent move
The feet of angels bright;
Unseen they pour blessing
And joy without ceasing
On each bud and blossom,
On each sleeping bosom.

They look in every thoughtless nest
Where birds are covered warm:
They visit caves of every beast,
To keep them all from harm:
If they see any weeping
That should have been sleeping,
They pour sleep on their head,
And sit down by their bed.

When wolves and tigers howl for prey,
They pitying stand and weep,
Seeking to drive their thirst away
And keep them from the sheep.
But, if they rush dreadful,
The angels, most heedful,

WILLIAM BLAKE

Receive each mild spirit,
New worlds to inherit.

And there the lion's ruddy eyes
Shall flow with tears of gold:
And pitying the tender cries,
And walking round the fold:
Saying, "Wrath by His meekness,
And, by His health, sickness,
Are driven away
From our immortal day.

"And now beside thee, bleating lamb,
I can lie down and sleep,
Or think on Him who bore thy name,
Graze after thee, and weep.
For, washed in life's river,
My bright mane for ever
Shall shine like the gold
As I guard o'er the fold."

Love's Secret

NEVER seek to tell thy love,
Love that never told can be;
For the gentle wind doth move
Silently, invisibly.

I told my love, I told my love,
I told her all my heart,
Trembling, cold, in ghastly fears.
Ah! she did depart!

WILLIAM BLAKE

Soon after she was gone from me,
A traveller came by,
Silently, invisibly:
He took her with a sigh.

Milton

AND did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green?
And was the holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here
Among these dark Satanic mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!
Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

WILLIAM BLAKE

A Tear Is an Intellectual Thing

BUT vain the sword and vain the bow,
They never can work War's overthrow.
The hermit's prayer and the widow's tear
Alone can free the world from fear.

For a tear is an intellectual thing,
And a sigh is the sword of an angel king,
And the bitter groan of the martyr's woe,
Is an arrow from the Almighty's bow.

Our Lesser Kindred

FROM "AUGURIES OF INNOCENCE"

A ROBIN redbreast in a cage
Puts all Heaven in a rage.
A dove-house filled with doves and pigeons
Shudders Hell through all its regions.
A dog starved at his master's gate
Predicts the ruin of the State.
A horse misused upon the road
Calls to Heaven for human blood.
Each outcry of the hunted hare
A fibre from the brain does tear.
A skylark wounded in the wing,
A cherubim does cease to sing.
The game-cock clipped and armed for fight
Does the rising sun affright.
Every wolf's and lion's howl
Raises from Hell a human soul.
The wild deer, wandering here and there,
Keeps the human soul from care.
The lamb misused breeds public strife,

WILLIAM BLAKE

And yet forgives the butcher's knife.
He who shall hurt the little wren
Shall never be beloved by men.
He who the ox to wrath has moved
Shall never be by woman loved.
The wanton boy that kills the fly
Shall feel the spider's enmity.
He who torments the chafer's sprite
Weaves a bower in endless night.
The caterpillar on the leaf
Repeats to thee thy mother's grief.
Kill not the moth nor butterfly,
For the last judgement draweth nigh.
He who shall train the horse to war
Shall never pass the polar bar.
The beggar's dog and widow's cat,
Feed them and thou wilt grow fat.

To the Evening Star

THOU fair-haired Angel of the Evening,
Now whilst the sun rests on the mountains, light
Thy bright torch of love—thy radiant crown
Put on, and smile upon our evening bed!
Smile on our loves; and while thou drawest the
Blue curtains of the sky, scatter thy silver dew
On every flower that shuts its sweet eyes
In timely sleep. Let thy West Wind sleep on
The lake; speak silence with thy glimmering eyes
And wash the dusk with silver.—Soon, full soon,
Dost thou withdraw; then the wolf rages wide,
And the lion glares through the dun forest,
The fleeces of our flocks are covered with
Thy sacred dew; protect them with thine influence!

WILLIAM BLAKE

Song

HOW sweet I roamed from field to field,
And tasted all the summer's pride;
Till I the Prince of Love beheld,
Who in the sunny beams did glide.

He showed me lilies for my hair,
And blushing roses for my brow;
And led me through his gardens fair,
Where all his golden pleasures grow.

With sweet May-dews my wings were wet,
And Phœbus fired my vocal rage;
He caught me in his silken net,
And shut me in his golden cage.

He loves to sit and hear me sing,
Then laughing sports and plays with me,
Then stretches out my golden wing,
And mocks my loss of liberty.

Song

MEMORY, hither come
And tune your merry notes;
And while upon the wind
Your music floats,
I'll pore upon the stream
Where sighing lovers dream,
And fish for fancies as they pass
Within the watery glass.

WILLIAM BLAKE

I'll drink of the clear stream,
And hear the linnet's song,
And there I'll lie and dream
The day along;
And when night comes I'll go
To places fit for woe,
Walking along the darkened valley,
With silent Melancholy.

Mad Song

THE wild winds weep,
And the night is a-cold,
Come hither, Sleep,
And my griefs enfold:
But lo! the morning peeps
Over the eastern steeps,
And the rustling beds of dawn
The earth do scorn.

Lo! to the vault
Of pavèd heaven
With sorrow fraught
My notes are driven;
They strike the ear of night,
Make weak the eyes of day;
They make mad the roaring winds
And with tempests play.

WILLIAM BLAKE

Like a fiend in a cloud
With howling woe
After night I do crowd
And with night will go;
I turn my back to the east
From whence comforts have increased;
For light doth seize my brain
With frantic pain.

ROBERT BURNS

SCOTLAND, 1759-1796

MAGNA CARTA, the Declaration of Independence and the French Rights of Man are not weightier documents in the history of freedom than are the songs of Burns. His satire is still keen and flashing. His musical arrows, as Emerson states, yet "sing through the air." He is so substantially a reformer that his grand plain sense links him with the greatest masters—Rabelais, Shakespeare in comedy, Cervantes, the earlier Samuel Butler. A true poet, he voices what a vast range of common life experiences! He has, as Emerson again says, "endeared the farm-house and cottage, patches and poverty, beans and barley; ale, the poor man's wine; hardship; the fear of debt; the dear society of bairns and wife, of brothers and sisters, proud of each other, knowing so few, and finding amends for want and obscurity in books and thoughts." As Burns was thus the poet of the poor, anxious, cheerful, working humanity, so was he the master of the language of lowly life. He grew up in a rural district, speaking a language unintelligible to all but

ROBERT BURNS

natives, and he has made the Lowland Scotch a Doric dialect of fame. Although "Burns was a poor, forlorn creature, with the smell of Scotch drink commonly about him, the aroma of the heather was there as well. . . . He felt that rank was but an accident, and wealth often but a theft, and devoutness often but a hypocrisy, and priesthood often but a sacrilege: he divined that whatever of wisdom, benevolence or heroism existed in his emotions and aspirations, was in him by virtue of the manhood in which he stood and which was living and formative within him."

Burns was a victim of crushing poverty and of brute hand labor, which left him stooped and weakened while yet a young man. Immediately on the publication of his first book in 1786 his name rang over all Scotland. A brilliant social career opened. He became a guest at aristocratic tables, where he bore himself with unaffected dignity, although shocking conservatives by his sympathy with the French Revolution and his earnest advocacy of radical reforms at home.

His variety of verse is marvellous, ranging from the rollicking humor and blazing wit of *Tam O' Shanter* to the blistering satire of *Holy Willie's Prayer* and *The Holy Fair*. A few of his immortal lyrics will ring forever in the heart of the world.

Of all the poets, larger and less, not one has been truer to his own thought, more faithful to the sight of his eye, to the sound in his ear, to the emotion of his heart than Burns. His poetry beams like an aureole over every hallowed spot where he suffered and sang: it breathes on the *Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon*; it is renewed with each returning Spring in his own *Mountain Daisy*, it lives in the immortal life of *Mary in Heaven*. So long as love is precious, bereavement sacred, hypocrisy hateful, pretension ridiculous, labor honorable and true manhood noble—so long as poetry, simple, natural, eloquent, is the delight of mankind—so long will the memory of this Ayrshire bard be green.

ROBERT BURNS

O Wert Thou in the Cauld Blast

TUNE—"THE LASS OF LIVINGSTONE"

Here is something as simple as a blade of grass, yet it is one of the immortal lyrics. It has a fine musical setting, and its noble passion has carried it into the romantic heart of the world.

O WERT thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,¹
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee;
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield² should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown,
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

¹ direction of the wind.

² shelter.

ROBERT BURNS

Auld Lang Syne

SHOULD auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to min'?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And days o' lang syne?

We twa hae rin about the braes,
And pu'd the gowans¹ fine;
But we've wander'd monie a weary fit²
Sin' auld lang syne.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae mornin' sun till dine;³
But seas between us braid hae roar'd
Sin' auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty fiere,⁴
And gie's a hand o' thine;
And we'll tak a right guid-willie⁵ waught
For auld lang syne.

And surely ye'll be your pint-stowp,
And surely I'll be mine;
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne!

For auld lang syne, my dear,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet
For auld lang syne.

¹ gowans] daisies.

⁴ fiere] partner.

² fit] foot.

⁵ guid-willie waught] friendly draught.

³ dine] dinner-time.

ROBERT BURNS

Bonnie Doon

YE flowery banks o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye blume sae fair!
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings upon the bough;
Thou minds me o' the happy days
When my fause luvè was true.

Thou'll break my heart, thou bonnie bird,
That sings beside thy mate;
For sae I sat, and sae I sang,
And wistna o' my fate.

Aft hae I roved by bonnie Doon,
To see the woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luvè,
And sae did I o' mine.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon a morn in June;
And sae I flourish'd on the morn,
And sae was pu'd or'¹ noon.

Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose
Upon its thorny tree;
But my fause luvè staw² my rose,
And left the thorn wi' me.

¹ or'] ere.

² staw] stole.

ROBERT BURNS

Ae Fond Kiss

A E fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage¹ thee!

Who shall say that Fortune grieves him
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me,
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame my partial fancy;
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her was to love her,
Love but her, and love for ever.

Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee weel, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee weel, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love and pleasure!

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever!
Ae fareweel, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
Warring sighs and groans I'll wage thee!

¹ wage] stake, plight.

ROBERT BURNS

Highland Mary

YE banks and braes and streams around
The castle o' Montgomery,
Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
Your waters never drumlie!¹
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there the longest tarry;
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloomed the gay green birk,
How rich the hawthorn's blossom,
As underneath their fragrant shade
I clasped her to my bosom!
The golden hours on angel wings
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me as light and life
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and locked embrace
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore oursels asunder;
But oh! fell Death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips
I aft hae kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!

¹ drumlie] miry.

ROBERT BURNS

And mouldering now in silent dust
That heart has lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

A Red, Red Rose

O MY Luve's like a red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June:
O my Luve's like the melodie
That's sweetly played in tune!

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in luve am I:
And I will luve thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry:

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will luve thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only Luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my Luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

To Mary in Heaven

THOU lingering star, with lessening ray,
Thou lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usher'st in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.

ROBERT BURNS

O Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

That sacred hour can I forget,
Can I forget the hallowed grove,
Where by the winding Ayr we met,
To live one day of parting love!
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past;
Thy image at our last embrace,—
Ah! little thought we 'twas our last!

Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening green;
The fragrant birch, and hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene;
The flowers sprang wanton to be pressed,
The birds sang love on every spray—
Till soon, too soon, the glowing west
Proclaimed the speed of wingèd day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care!
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary! dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

A Prayer in the Prospect of Death

O THOU unknown Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

If I have wandered in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As something, loudly in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formèd me
With passions wild and strong;
And listening to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human weakness has come short,
Or frailty stept aside,
Do Thou, All-Good! for such Thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with intention I have erred,
No other plea I have,
But, Thou art good; and Goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

From "Address to the Toothache"

MY curse upon your venomèd stang,
That shoots my tortured gums alang,
And through my lugs gies monie a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;

ROBERT BURNS

Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbor's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases!
Ay mocks our groan.

To a Mountain Daisy

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOW, IN APRIL, 1786

WEE, modest, crimson-tippèd flower,
Thou's met me in an evil hour,
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my power,
Thou bonny gem.

Alas! it's no thy neibor sweet,
The bonny lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' speckled breast,
When upward springing, blithe to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce reared above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

ROBERT BURNS

The flaunting flowers our gardens yield,
High sheltering woods and wa's maun shield:
But thou beneath the random bield
 O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie stibble-field,
 Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sunward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
 In humble guise;
But now the share uptears thy bed,
 And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless maid,
Sweet floweret of the rural shade,
By love's simplicity betrayed,
 And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soiled, is laid
 Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starred:
Unskillful he to note the card
 Of prudent lore,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
 And overwhelm him o'er!

Such fate to suffering worth is given,
Who long with wants and woes has striven,
By human pride or cunning driven
 To misery's brink,
Till wrenched of every stay but Heaven,
 He, ruined, sink!

ROBERT BURNS

Even thou who mourn'st the daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date:
Stern Ruin's plowshare drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crushed beneath the furrow's weight
Shall be thy doom!

For a' That

*Robert Burns, the plowman and poet, "dinnered wi' a lord."
The story goes that he was put at the second table. That
lord is dead, but Robert Burns still lives.*

IS there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
We dare be poor for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that!

What though on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hoddin-gray,¹ and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine,
A man's a man for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king o' men for a' that!

¹ hoddin-gray] coarse woolen clothes.

ROBERT BURNS

Ye see yon birkie¹ ca'd a lord,
Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
He's but a coof² for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
His riband, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can make a belted knight,
A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his might,
Guid faith be maunna fa'³ that!
For a' that, and a' that,
Their dignities, and a' that
The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

Then let us pray that come it may—
As come it will for a' that—
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
May bear the gree,⁴ and a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that!

¹ birkie] impudent fellow.

² coof] fool; blockhead.

³ fa'] manage

⁴ gree] preeminence

ROBERT BURNS

*To a Mouse, on Turning Her Up in Her
Nest, with the Plough, November, 1785*

WEE, sleekit, cowerin, tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickerin brattle!¹
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring pattle!²

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion,
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor, earth-born companion,
An' fellow-mortal!

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou maun live!
A daimen-icker³ in a thrave
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never miss't!

Thy wee bit housie, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin!
An' naething, now, to big⁴ a new one,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin,
Baith snell⁵ an' keen!

¹ hurry.

² hand-stick for clearing the plough.

³ An ear of corn now and then; a thrave is twenty-four sheaves.

⁴ build.

⁵ bitter.

ROBERT BURNS

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
 Thou thought to dwell,
Till, crash! the cruel coulter past
 Out through thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble
Hast cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turned out, for a' thy trouble,
 But¹ house or hald,²
To thole³ the winter's sleety dribble,
 An' cranreuch⁴ cauld!

But, Mousie, thou art no thy lane,⁵
In proving foresight may be vain:
The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men,
 Gang aft agley,⁶
An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain,
 For promised joy.

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But, och! I backward cast my e'e
 On prospects drear!
An' forward, though I canna see,
 I guess an' fear!

¹ without.

² holding.

³ endure.

⁴ hoar-frost.

⁵ thyself alone.

⁶ awry.

ROBERT BURNS

*Bannockburn. Robert Bruce's Address to
His Army*

TUNE—"HEY TUTTIE TATTIE"

SCOTS, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led;
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie.

Now's the day, and now's the hour;
See the front o' battle lower;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha for Scotland's King and law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or free-man fa'?
Let him on wi' me!

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains!
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they *shall* be free!

Lay the proud usurpers low!
Tyrant's fall in every foe!
Liberty's in every blow!
Let us do, or die!

'Address to the Wood-lark

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray;
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow joined
Sic notes o' wae could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

Tam o' Shanter. A Tale

*Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.
Gawin Douglas.*

WHEN chapman billies¹ leave the street,
And drouthy neibors, neibors meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;²

¹ pedlar fellows.

² road.

ROBERT BURNS

While we sit housing at the nappy,¹
 An' getting fou and unco happy,
 We think na on the lang Scots miles,
 The mosses, waters, slaps² and stiles,
 That lie between us and our hame,
 Where sits our sulky, sullen dame,
 Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
 Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest Tam O' Shanter,
 As he frae Ayr ae night did canter:
 (Auld Ayr, whom ne'er a town surpasses
 For honest men and bonnie lasses).

O Tam! hadst thou but been sae wise,
 As ta'en thy ain wife Kate's advice!
 She tauld thee weel thou wast a skellum,³
 A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;⁴
 That frae November till October,
 Ae market-day thou was nae sober;
 That ilka melder,⁵ wi' the miller,
 Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
 That every naig was ca'd a shoe on,
 The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
 That at the Lord's house, even on Sunday,
 Thou drank wi' Kirkton⁶ Jean till Monday.
 She prophesied that, late or soon,
 Thou wad be found deep drowned in Doon;
 Or caught wi' warlocks⁷ in the mirk,⁸
 By Alloway's auld haunted kirk.

¹ ale.

² gaps in fences.

³ blockhead.

⁴ idle talker.

⁵ grinding lot.

⁶ Kirkton is the distinctive name of a village in which the parish kirk stands.

⁷ wizards.

⁸ dark.

ROBERT BURNS

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,¹
To think how many counsels sweet,
How many lengthened, sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right,
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats,² that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, Souter Johnny,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony:
Tam lo'ed him like a very brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.

The night drave on wi' sangs and clatter;
And ay the ale was growing better:
The landlady and Tam grew gracious,
Wi' favors, secret, sweet and precious:
The souter³ tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drowned himself amang the nappy!
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes winged their way wi' pleasure;
Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

¹ makes me weep.

² frothing ale.

³ shoemaker.

ROBERT BURNS

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed;
Or like the snow falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches Tam maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattling showers rose on the blast;
The speedy gleams the darkness swallowed;
Loud, deep and lang, the thunder bellowed:
That night, a child might understand,
The Deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, Meg,
A better never lifted leg,
Tam skelpit¹ on through dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his gude blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glowering round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry.

¹ hurried.

ROBERT BURNS

By this time he was cross the ford,
Where in the snaw the chapman smooored;¹
And past the birks² and meikle³ stane,
Where drunken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Where hunters fand the murdered bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hanged hersel.
Before him Doon pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars through the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll:
When, glimmering through the groaning trees,
Kirk Alloway seemed in a bleeze;
Through ilka bore⁴ the beams were glancing;
And loud resounded mirth and dancing.

Inspiring bold John Barleycorn!
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae, we'll face the Devil!
The swats sae reamed in Tammie's noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.
But Maggie stood right sair astonished,
Till, by the heel and hand admonished,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, now! Tam saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent new frae France,
But hornpipes, jig, strathspeys and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
At winnock-bunker⁵ in the east,

¹ smothered.

⁴ hole in the wall.

² birches.

³ big.

⁵ window-seat.

ROBERT BURNS

There sat old Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie¹ tyke, black, grim and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screwed the pipes and gart² them skirl,³
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.
Coffins stood round, like open presses,
That shawed the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip⁴ slight
Each in its cauld hand held a light,
By which heroic Tam was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;⁵
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristened bairns;
A thief, new-cuttet frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red rusted;
Five scimitars, wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair of horrible and awfu',
Which even to name wad be unlawfu'.

As Tammie glowred, amazed and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,

¹ shaggy.

² forced.

³ scream.

⁴ magic.

⁵ irons.

ROBERT BURNS

And coost her duddies¹ to the wark,
And linket² at it in her sark!

Now Tam, O Tam, had thae been queans
A' plump and strapping in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie³ flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder linnen⁴
Thir⁵ breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' gude blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,⁶
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But withered bedlams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags, wad spean⁷ a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,⁸
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But Tam kend what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kend on Carrick shore;
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perished mony a bonie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,⁹
And kept the country-side in fear,)
Her cutty¹⁰ sark, o' Paisley harn,¹¹

¹ clothes.

² linked.

³ greasy.

⁴ The manufacturing term for a fine linen, woven in a reed of 1700 divisions.—*Cromek*.

⁵ these.

⁶ loins.

⁷ wean.

⁸ short staff.

⁹ barley.

¹⁰ short.

¹¹ Very coarse linen.

ROBERT BURNS

That, while a lassie, she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kenned thy reverend granny,
That sark she coft¹ for her wee Nanny,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches,)
Wad ever graced a dance of witches!

But here my Muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her power;
To sing how Nannie lap and flang
(A souple jade she was, and strang),
And how Tam stood, like ane bewitched,
And thought his very een enriched;
Even Satan glowred, and fidget fu' fain,
And hotched and blew wi' might and main:
Till first ae caper, syne² anither,
Tam tint³ his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he Maggie rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,⁴
When plundering herds assail their byke;⁵
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market-crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So Maggie runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch skreech and hollow.

¹ bought.

² then.

³ lost.

⁴ bustle.

⁵ hive.

ROBERT BURNS

Ah, Tam! ah, Tam; thou'll get thy fairin!
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy Kate awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, Meg,
And win the key-stane¹ of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they darena cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient² a tail she had to shake!
For Nannie, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble Maggie pressed,
And flew at Tam wi' furious ettle;³
But little wist she Maggie's mettle—
Ae spring brought off her master hale,
But left behind her ain gray tail:
The carlin caught her by the rump,
And left poor Maggie scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son, tak heed;
Whene'er to drink you are inclined,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think, ye may buy the joys owre dear,
Remember Tam o' Shanter's mare.

¹ It is a well-known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream. It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with bogles, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.—R. B.

² deuce (fiend).

³ aim.

ROBERT BURNS

Address to the Deil

*O prince! O Chief of many throned Powers,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.—*
Milton.

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick or Clootie,
Wha in your cavern grim an' sootie,
Closed under hatches,
Spairges¹ about the brunstane cootie,²
To scaud poor wretches.

Hear me, auld Hangie, for a wee,
An' let poor damnèd bodies be;
I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
Even to a deil,
To skelp³ an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy power, an' great thy fame;
Far kenned an' noted is thy name:
An', though yon lowin heugh's⁴ thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An', faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur⁵

Whiles, ranging like a roarin' lion,
For prey a' holes an' corners tryin;
Whiles on the strong-winged tempest flyin,
Tirlin⁶ the kirks;

¹ splashes.

² footpail.

³ slap.

⁴ flaming pit.

⁵ Neither bashful nor apt to be scared.

⁶ unroofing.

ROBERT BURNS

Whiles in the human bosom pryin,
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend grannie say,
In lanely glens ye like to stray;
Or where auld ruined castles, gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wanderer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.¹

When twilight did my grannie summon,
To say her prayers, douce, honest woman!
Aft 'yont the dyke she's heard you bummin,
W' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin, through the boortrees² comin,
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentint³ light,
Wi' you, mysel, I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-buss,⁴ stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve⁵ did shake,
Each bristled hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch, stoor,⁶ 'quaick, quaick,'
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squattered⁷ like a drake,
On whistling wings.

¹ frightful moan.

² elder trees.

³ slanting.

⁴ a bush of rushes.

⁵ fist.

⁶ hoarse.

⁷ fluttered.

ROBERT BURNS

Let warlocks¹ grim, an' withered hags,
 Tell how wi' you on ragweed² nags,
 They skim the muirs, an' dizzy crags,
 Wi' wicked speed;
 And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
 Owre howkit³ dead.

Thence, countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
 May plunge an' plunge the kirk⁴ in vain;
 For, oh! the yellow treasure's taen
 By witching skill;
 An' dawtit,⁵ twal-pint⁶ Hawkie's gaen
 As yell's⁷ the bill.⁸

When thowes⁹ dissolve the snawy hoord,¹⁰
 An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
 Then Water-kelpies haunt the foord,
 By your direction,
 An' nighted Travellers are allured
 To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing Spunkies¹¹
 Decoy the wight that late an' drunk is:
 The bleezin, curst, mischievous monkeys
 Delude his eyes,
 Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
 Ne'er mair to rise.

¹ wizards.

² ragwort.

³ digged up.

⁴ churn.

⁵ fondled.

⁶ twelve-pint.

⁷ milkless.

⁸ bull.

⁹ thaws.

¹⁰ hoard.

¹¹ Will-o'-the-wisp.

ROBERT BURNS

When masons' mystic word an' grip,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest 'brother' ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell.

Lang syne, in Eden's bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were paired,
An' all the soul of love they shared,
The raptured hour,
Sweet on the fragrant, flowery swaird,
In shady bower:

Then you, ye auld, snick-drawin' ¹ dog!
Ye came to Paradise incog,
An' played on man a cursed brogue, ²
(Black be you fa' ³!)
An' gied the infant warld a shog, ⁴
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz, ⁵
Wi' reekit duds, ⁶ an' reestit gizz, ⁷
Ye did present your smoutie phiz ⁸
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented ⁹ on the man of Uzz
Your spitefu' joke?

¹ Who draws stealthily the door-bolt.

² trick.

³ lot.

⁴ shock.

⁵ bustle.

⁶ smoky rags.

⁷ singed periwig.

⁸ blackened face.

⁹ slanted.

ROBERT BURNS

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
 An' brak him out o' house an' hal',
 While scabs an' blotches did him gall,
 Wi' bitter claw,
 An' lows'd¹ his ill-tongue wicked scaul,²
 Was warst ava?³

But a' your doings to rehearse,
 You wily snares and fechtin⁴ fierce,
 Sin' that day Michael⁵ did you pierce,
 Down to this time,
 Wad ding⁶ a' Lallan⁷ tongue, or Erse,
 In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld Cloots, I ken ye're thinkin,
 A certain Bardie's rantin, drinkin,
 Some luckless hour will send him linkin⁸
 To your black pit;
 But, faith! he'll turn a corner jinkin,⁹
 An' cheat you yet.

But, fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben!
 O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
 Ye aiblins¹⁰ might—I dinna ken—
 Still hae a stake—
 I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
 Even for your sake!

¹ loosed.

² scold.

³ of all.

⁴ fighting.

⁵ Vide Milton, Book vi.—R. B.

⁶ worst.

⁷ Lowland.

⁸ tripping.

⁹ dodging.

¹⁰ perhaps.

WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES

ENGLAND, 1762-1850

THIS poet-churchman came into literary prominence in 1789 on publishing a collection of fourteen sonnets, which was received with extraordinary favor, not only by the general public in England, but also by such men as Coleridge and Wordsworth. In 1807 he published a *Life of Alexander Pope*, in the preface to which he expressed some views on poetry which resulted in a heated controversy with Byron, Campbell and others.

Time and Grief

O TIME! who know'st a lenient hand to lay
Softest on sorrow's wound, and slowly thence
(Lulling to sad repose the weary sense)
The faint pang stealest unperceived away;
On thee I rest my only hope at last,
And think, when thou hast dried the bitter tear
That flows in vain o'er all my soul held dear,
I may look back on every sorrow past,
And meet life's peaceful evening with a smile:
As some lone bird, at day's departing hour,
Sings in the sunbeam, of the transient shower
Forgetful, though its wings are wet the while;
Yet ah! how much must this poor heart endure,
Which hopes from thee, and thee alone, a cure!

MARY A. BARR
SCOTLAND, 18TH CENTURY

I Wouldna Gie a Copper Plack

I WOULDNA gie a copper plack
For only man that turns his back
On duty clear:

I wouldna tak his word or note,
I wouldna trust him for a groat,
Nor lift an oar in ony boat
Which he might steer.

I wouldna gie an auld bawbee
For ony man that I could see
Wha didna hold
The sweetness o' his mither's name,
The kindness o' his brither's claim,
The honor o' a woman's fame
For mair than gold.

CATHERINE MARIA FANSHAWE

ENGLAND, 1765-1834

Riddle

'T WAS whispered in Heaven, 'twas muttered in
Hell,

And echo caught softly the sound as it fell;
In the confines of earth 'twas permitted to rest,
And the depth of the ocean its presence confessed;
'Twas seen in the lightning, 'twas heard in the thunder,
'Twill be found in the spheres when they're riven
asunder;

'Twas given to man with his earliest breath;
It assists at his birth and attends him in death,
Presides o'er his happiness, honor and health,
'Tis the prop of his house and the end of his wealth;
It begins every hope, every wish it must bound;
With the husbandman toils, and with monarchs is
crowned;

In the heaps of the miser, 'tis hoarded with care,
But is sure to be lost in the prodigal heir;
Without it the soldier and sailor may roam,
But woe to the wretch who expels it from home;
In the whispers of conscience it there will be found,
Nor e'er in the whirlwind of passion be drowned;
It softens the heart, and though deaf to the ear,
It will make it acutely and instantly hear.

But in shades let it rest, like an elegant flower:
Oh! breathe on it softly, it dies in an hour.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT (LADY NAIRNE)
SCOTLAND, 1766-1845

The Land o' the Leal

I'M wearin' awa', John,
Like snaw-wreaths in thaw, John,
I'm wearin' awa'
To the land o' the leal.
There's nae sorrow there, John,
There's neither cauld nor care, John,
The day is aye fair
In the land o' the leal.

Our bonnie bairn's there, John,
She was baith gude and fair, John;
And oh, we grudged her sair
To the land o' the leal.
But sorrow's sel' wears past, John
And joy's a-coming fast, John,
The joy that's aye to last
In the land o' the leal.

Sae dear's the joy was bought, John,
Sae free the battle fought, John,
That sinfu' man e'er brought
To the land o' the leal.
O, dry your glistening e'e, John!
My saul langs to be free, John,
And angels beckon me
To the land o' the leal.

CAROLINE OLIPHANT

O, haud ye leal and true, John!
Your day it's wearin' through, John,
And I'll welcome you
To the land o' the leal.
Now fare-ye-weel, my ain John,
This world's cares are vain, John,
We'll meet, and we'll be fain,
In the land o' the leal.

JAMES HOGG

SCOTLAND, 1770-1835

AFTER a few hits and misses in the various departments of literature, Hogg, popularly and poetically known as the Ettrick Shepherd, from the fact that he was born at Ettrick, Scotland, and long shepherded sheep for a livelihood, rode into popularity with *The Queen's Wake* (1813). This collection of songs and ballads stamped Hogg as—after Burns—the greatest poet that had ever sprung from the hard struggling life of the people. His signal achievement, *The Witch of Fife*, is an example of Scotch wit and humor, well worthy of a place in any anthology.

The Witch of Fife

WHERE have ye been, ye ill woman,
These three lang nights frae hame?
What gars the sweat drap frae yer brow,
Like drops o' the saut sea-faem?

"It fears me muckle ye have seen
What gude man never knew;
It fears me muckle ye have been,
Where the gray cock never crew.

JAMES HOGG

"But the spell may crack, and the bridle break,
Then sharp yer word will be;
Ye had better sleep in yer bed at hame,
Wi' yer dear little bairns and me."

"Sit dune, sit dune, my leal auld man,
Sit dune, and listen to me;
I'll gar the hair stand on yer crown,
And the cauld sweat blind yer e'e.

"But tell nae words, my gude auld man,
Tell never a word again;
Or dear shall be your courtesy,
And driche and sair yer pain.

"The first leet night, when the new moon set,
When all was douffe and mirk,
We saddled our nags wi' the moonfern leaf,
And rode frae Kilmerrin kirk.

"Some horses were of the brume-cow framed,
And some of the green bay tree;
But mine was made of ane hemlock shaw,
And a stout stallion was he.

"We raide the tod doune on the hill,
The martin on the law;
And we hunted the owlet out o' breath,
And forced him doune to fa'."

"What guid was that, ye ill woman?
What guid was that to thee?
Ye would better have been in yer bed at hame,
Wi' yer dear little bairns and me."

JAMES HOGG

“And aye we rode, as sae merrily rode,
Through the merkest gloffs of the night;
And we swam the flood, and we darnit the wood,
Till we came to the Lommond height.

“And when we came to the Lommond height,
Sae lightly we lighted doune;
And we drank frae the horns that never grew,
The beer that was never browin.

“Then up there rose a wee wee man,
From neath the moss-gray stane;
His face was wan like the colliflower,
For he neither had blude nor bane.

“He set a reed-pipe till his mouth;
And he played sae bonnily,
Till the gray curlew, and the blackcock flew
To listen his melody.

“It rang sae sweet through the green Lommond,
That the night-wind lowner blew;
And it soupit along the Loch Leven,
And wakened the white sea-mew.

“It rang sae sweet through the green Lommond,
Sae sweetly and sae shrill,
That the weasels leaped out of their mouldy holes,
And danced on the midnight hill.

“The corby crow came gleding near,
The erne gaed veering bye;
And the trouts leaped out of the Leven Loch,
Charmed with the melody.

JAMES HOGG

“And aye we danced on the green Lommond,
Till the dawn on the ocean grew:
Nae wonder I was a weary wight
When I cam hame to you.”

“What guid, what guid, my weird, weird wyfe,
What guid was that to thee?
Ye wad better have been in yer bed at hame,
Wi’ yer dear little bairns and me.”

“The second night, when the new moon set,
O’er the roaring sea we flew;
The cockle-shell our trusty bark,
Our sails of the green sea-rue.

“And the bauld winds blew, and the fire-flauchts
flew,
And the sea ran to the sky;
And the thunder it growled, and the sea-dogs
howled,
As we gaed scurrying by.

“And aye we mounted the sea-green hills,
Till we brushed through the clouds of heaven,
Then soused downright like the stern-shot light,
Fra the lift’s blue casement driven.

“But our tackle stood, and our bark was good,
And sae pang was our pearly prow;
When we couldna speil the brow of the waves,
We needled them through below.

“As fast as the hail, as fast as the gale,
As fast as the midnight leme,

JAMES HOGG

We bored the breast of the bursting swale,
Or fluffed in the floating faem.

“And when to the Norroway shore we wan,
We mounted our steeds of the wind,
And we splashed the floode, and we darnit the
wood,
And we left the shore behind.

“Fleet is the roe on the green Lommond,
And swift is the couryng grew;
The rein-deer dun can eithly run,
When the hounds and the horns pursue.

“But neither the roe, nor the reindeer dun,
The hind nor the couryng grew,
Could fly o’er mountain, moor, and dale,
As our braw steeds they flew.

“The dales were deep, and the Doffrins steep,
And we rose to the skies ee-bree:
White, white was our road that was never trode,
O’er the snows of eternity.

“And when we came to the Lapland lone,
The fairies were all in array,
For all the genii of the north
Were keeping their holiday.

“The warlock men and the weird women,
And the fays of the wood and the steep,
And the phantom hunters all were there,
And the mermaids of the deep.

JAMES HOGG

"And they washed us all with the witch-water,
Distilled frae the moorland dew,
Till our beauty bloomed like the Lapland rose,
That wild in the forest grew."

"Ye lee, ye lee, ye ill woman,
Sae loud as I hear ye lee!
For the worst-faured wyfe on the shores of Fyfe
Is comely compared wi' thee."

"Then the mermaids sang, and the woodlands rang,
Sae sweetly swelled the choir;
On every cliff a harp they hang,
On every tree a lyre.

"And aye they sang, and the woodlands rang,
And we drank, and we drank sae deep;
Then soft in the arms of the warlock men,
We laid us dune to sleep."

"Away, away, ye ill woman,
An ill death might ye dee!
When ye hae proved sae false to yer God,
Ye can never prove true to me."

"And there we learned frae the fairy folk,
And frae our master true,
The words that can bear us through the air,
And locks and bars undo.

"Last night we met at Maisry's cot;
Right well the words we knew;
And we set a foot on the black cruik-shell,
And out at the lum we flew.

JAMES HOGG

"And we flew o'er hill, and we flew o'er dale,
And we flew o'er firth and sea,
Untill we cam to merry Carlisle,
Where we lighted on the lea.

"We gaed to the vault beyond the tower,
Where we entered free as air;
And we drank, and we drank of the bishop's wine
Till we could drink nae mair."

"Gin that be true, my gude auld wyfe,
Whilk thou hast tauld to me,
Betide my death, betide my lyfe,
I'll bear thee company.

"Next time ye gang to merry Carlisle
To drink of the blude-red wine,
Beshrew my heart, I'll fly with thee,
If the deil should fly behind."

"Ah! little ye ken, my silly auld man,
The dangers we maun dree;
Last night we drank of the bishop's wine,
Till near near taen were we.

"Afore we wan to the sandy ford,
The gor-cocks nichering flew;
The lofty crest of Ettrick Pen
Was waved about with blue,
And, flichtering through the air, we fand
The chill chill morning dew.

"As we flew o'er the hills of Braid,
The sun rose fair and clear;

JAMES HOGG

There gurly James, and his barons braw,
Were out to hunt the deer.

"Their bows they drew, their arrows flew,
And pierced the air with speed,
Till purple fell the morning dew
With witch-blude rank and red.

"Little ye ken, my silly auld man,
The dangers we maun dree;
Ne wonder I am a weary wight
When I come hame to thee."

"But tell me the *word*, my gude auld wyfe,
Come tell it me speedily;
For I long to drink of the gude red wine,
And to wing the air with thee.

"Yer hellish horse I willna ride,
Nor sail the seas in the wind;
But I can flee as well as thee,
And I'll drink till ye be blind."

"O fy! O fy! my leal auld man,
That word I darena tell;
It would turn this warld all upside down,
And make it warse than hell.

"For all the lasses in the land
Wald mount the wind and fly;
And the men would doff their doublets syde,
And after them would ply."

But the auld gude man was a cunning auld man,
And a cunning auld man was he;

JAMES HOGG

And he watched and he watched for mony a
 night,
The witches' flight to see.

One night he darnit in Maisry's cot;
The fearless hags came in;
And he heard the word of awesome weird;
And he saw their deeds of sin.

Then ane by ane, they said that word,
As fast to the fire they drew;
Then set a foot on the black cruik-shell,
And out at the lum they flew.

The auld gudeman came frae his hole
With fear and muckle dread,
But yet he couldna think to rue,
For the wine came in his head.

He set his foot in the black cruik-shell,
With a fixed and a wawling ee;
And he said the word that I darena say,
And out at the lum flew he.

The witches scaled the moon-beam pale;
Deep groaned the trembling wind;
But they never wist that our auld gudeman
Was hovering them behind.

They flew to the vaults of merry Carlisle,
Where they entered free as air;
And they drank, and they drank of the bishop's
 wine
Till they coulde drink nae mair.

JAMES HOGG

The auld gudeman he grew sae crouse,
He danced on the mouldy ground,
And he sang the bonniest songs of Fife,
And he tuzzlit the kerlyngs round.

And aye he pierced the tither butt,
And he sucked, and he sucked sae lang,
Till his een they closed, and his voice grew low,
And his tongue would hardly gang.

The kerlyngs drank of the bishop's wine
Till they scented the morning wind;
Then clove again the yielding air,
And left the auld man behind.

And aye he slept on the damp damp floor,
He slept and he snored amain;
He never dreamed he was far frae hame,
Or that the auld wives were gane.

And aye he slept on the damp damp floor,
Till past the mid-day height,
When wakened by five rough Englishmen,
That trailed him to the light.

"Now wha are ye, ye silly auld man,
That sleeps sae sound and sae weel?
How gat ye into the bishop's vault
Through locks and bars of steel?"

The auld gudeman he tried to speak,
But ane word he couldna finde;
He tried to think, but his head whirled round,
And ane thing he couldna minde:

JAMES HOGG

"I cam frae Fyfe," the auld man cried,
"And I cam on the midnight winde."

They nicked the auld man, and they pricked the
 auld man,
And they yerked his limbs with twine,
Till the red blude ran in his hose and shoon,
But some cried it was wine.

They licked the auld man, and they pricked
 the auld man,
And they tyed him till ane stone;
And they set ane bele-fire him about,
To burn him skin and bone.

"O wae to me!" said the puir auld man,
"That ever I saw the day!
And wae be to all the ill women
That lead puir men astray!

"Let nevir ane auld man after this
 To lawless greede incline;
Let never ane auld man after this
 Rin post to the deil for wine."

The reeke flew up in the auld man's face,
And choked him bitterlye;
And the low cam up with an angry blaze,
And he singed his auld breck-nee.

He looked to the land frae whence he came,
For looks he could get ne mae;
And he thoughte of his dear little bairns at
 hame,
And O the auld man was wae!

JAMES HOGG

But they turned their faces to the sun,
With gloffe and wonderous glare,
For they saw ane thing baith large and dun,
Comin sweeping down the air.

That bird it cam frae the lands o' Fife,
And it cam right tymeouslye,
For who was it but the auld man's wife,
Just comed his death to see.

She put ane red cap on his head,
And the auld gudeman looked fain,
Then whispered ane word intil his lug,
And toved to the aire again.

•The auld gudeman he gae ane bob
I' the midst o' the burning lowe;
And the shackles that bound him to the ring,
They fell frae his arms like tow.

He drew his breath, and he said the word,
And he said it with muckle glee,
Then set his feet on the burning pile,
And away to the air flew he.

Till ance he cleared the swirling reeke,
He lukit baith feared and sad;
But when he wan to the light blue aire,
He laughed as he'd been mad.

His arms were spread, and his head was high,
And his feet stuck out behind;
And the laibies of the auld man's coat
Were wauffing in the wind.

JAMES HOGG

And aye he neicherit, and aye he flew,
For he thought the play sae rare;
It was like the voice of the gander blue,
When he flees through the air.

He lookèd back to the Carlisle men
As he bored the norlan sky;
He nodded his head, and gave ane girn
But he never said gude-bye.

They vanished far i' the lift's blue wale,
Nae mair the English saw,
But the auld man's laugh came on the gale,
With a lang and a loud guffaw.

May everilke man in the land of Fife
Read what the drinker's dree;
And never curse his puir auld wife,
Right wicked although she be.

Jock Johnstone, the Tinkler

O, CAME ye ower by the Yoke-burn Ford,
Or down the King's Road of the cleuch?¹
Or saw ye a knight and a lady bright,
Wha ha'e gane the gate they baith shall rue?"

"I saw a knight and a lady bright
Ride up the cleuch at the break of day;
The knight upon a coal-black steed,
And the dame on one of a silver-gray.

¹ dell.

JAMES HOGG

"And the lady's palfrey flew the first,
With many a clang of silver bell:
Swift as the raven's morning flight
The two went scouring ower the fell.

"By this time they are man and wife,
And standing in St. Mary's fane;
And the lady in the grass-green silk
A maid you will never see again."

"But I can tell thee, saucy wight—
And that the runaway shall prove—
Revenge to a Douglas is as sweet
As maiden charms or maiden's love."

"Since thou say'st that, my Lord Douglas,
Good faith some clinking there will be;
Beshrew my heart but and my sword,
If I winna turn and ride with thee!"

They whipped out ower the Shepherd Cleuch,
And down the links o' the Corsecleuch Burn;
And aye the Douglas swore by his sword
To win his love, or ne'er return.

"First fight your rival, Lord Douglas,
And then brag after, if you may;
For the Earl of Ross is as brave a lord
As ever gave good weapon sway.

"But I for ae poor siller merk,
Or thirteen pennies and a bawbee,
Will tak in hand to fight you baith,
Or beat the winner, whiche'er it be."

JAMES HOGG

The Douglas turned him on his steed,
And I wat a loud laughter leuch he:
"Of a' the fools I have ever met,
Man, I ha'e never met ane like thee.

"Art thou akin to lord or knight,
Or courtly squire or warrior leal?"
"I am a tinkler," quo' the wight,
"But I like croun-cracking unco weel."

When they came to St. Mary's kirk,
The chaplain shook for very fear;
And aye he kissed the cross, and said,
"What deevil has sent that Douglas here!

"He neither values book nor ban,
But curses all without demur;
And cares nae mair for a holy man
Than I do for a worthless cur."

"Come here, thou bland and brittle priest,
And tell to me without delay
Where you have hid the lord of Ross
And the lady that came at the break of day."

"No knight or lady, good Lord Douglas,
Have I beheld since break of morn;
And I never saw the lord of Ross
Since the woful day that I was born."

Lord Douglas turned him round about,
And looked the tinkler in the face;
Where he beheld a lurking smile,
And a deevil of a dour grimace.

JAMES HOGG

"How's this, how's this, thou tinkler loun?

Hast thou presumed to lie on me?"

"Faith that I have!" the tinkler said,

"And a right good turn I have done to thee;

"For the lord of Ross and thy own true-love,

The beauteous Harriet of Thirlestane,

Rade west away, ere the break of day;

And you'll never see the dear maid again;

"So I thought it best to bring you here,

On a wrang scent, of my own accord;

For had you met the Johnstone clan,

They wad ha'e made mince-meat of a lord."

At this the Douglas was so wroth

He wist not what to say or do;

But he strak the tinkler o'er the croun,

Till the blood came dreeping ower his brow.

"Beshrew my heart," quo' the tinkler lad,

"Thou bear'st thee most ungallantly!

If these are the manners of a lord,

They are manners that winna gang doun wi
me."

"Hold up thy hand," the Douglas cried,

"And keep thy distance, tinkler loun!"

"That I will not," the tinkler said,

"Though I and my mare should both go
doun!"

"I have armor on," cried the Lord Douglas,

"Cuirass and helm, as you may see."

JAMES HOGG

"The deil me care!" quo' the tinkler lad;
"I shall have a skelp at them and thee."

"You are not horsed," quo' the Lord Douglas,
"And no remorse this weapon brooks."
"Mine's a right good yaud," quo' the tinkler
lad,
"And a great deal better nor she looks."

"So stand to thy weapons, thou haughty lord,
What I have taken I needs must give;
Thou shalt never strike a tinkler again,
For the langest day thou hast to live."

Then to it they fell, both sharp and snell,
Till the fire from both their weapons flew;
But the very first shock that they met with,
The Douglas his rashness 'gan to rue.

For though he had on a sark of mail,
And a cuirass on his breast wore he,
With a good steel bonnet on his head,
Yet the blood ran trickling to his knee.

The Douglas sat upright and firm,
Aye as together their horses ran;
But the tinkler laid on like a very deil—
Siccan strokes were never laid on by man.

"Hold up thy hand, thou tinkler loun,"
Cried the poor priest, with whining din;
"If thou hurt the brave Lord James Douglas,
A curse be on thee and all thy kin!"

JAMES HOGG

"I care no more for Lord James Douglas
Than Lord James Douglas cares for me;
But I want to let his proud heart know
That a tinkler's a man as well as he."

So they fought on, and they fought on,
Till good Lord Douglas' breath was gone;
And the tinkler bore him to the ground,
With rush, with rattle, and with groan.

"O hon! O hon!" cried the proud Douglas,
"That I this day should have lived to see!
For sure my honor I have lost,
And a leader again I can never be!

"But tell me of thy kith and kin,
And where was bred thy weapon hand?
For thou art the wale of tinkler louns
That ever was born in fair Scotland."

"My name's Jock Johnstone," quo' the wight;
"I winna keep in my name frae thee;
And here, tak thou thy sword again,
And better friends we two shall be."

But the Douglas swore a solemn oath,
That was a debt he could never owe;
He would rather die at the back of the dike
Than owe his sword to a man so low.

"But if thou wilt ride under my banner,
And bear my livery and my name,
My right-hand warrior thou shalt be
And I'll knight thee on the field of fame."

JAMES HOGG

"Woe worth thy wit, good Lord Douglas,
To think I'd change my trade for thine;
Far better and wiser would you be,
To live a journeyman of mine,

"To mend a kettle or a casque,
Or clout a goodwife's yettlin' pan—
Upon my life, good Lord Douglas,
You'd make a noble tinkler-man!

"I would give you a drammock twice a day,
And sunkets on a Sunday morn,
And you should be a rare adept
In steel and copper, brass and horn!

"I'll fight you every day you rise,
Till you can act the hero's part;
Therefore, I pray you, think of this,
And lay it seriously to heart."

The Douglas writhed beneath the lash,
Answering with an inward curse—
Like salmon wriggling on a spear,
That makes his deadly wound the worse.

But up there came two squires renowned;
In search of Lord Douglas they came;
And when they saw their master down,
Their spirits mounted in a flame.

And they flew upon the tinkler wight,
Like perfect tigers on their prey:
But the tinkler heaved his trusty sword,
And made him ready for the fray.

JAMES HOGG

"Come one to one, ye coward knaves,
Come hand to hand, and steed to steed;
I would that ye were better men,
For this is glorious work indeed!"

Before you could have counted twelve,
The tinkler's wondrous chivalry
Had both the squires upon the sward,
And their horses galloping o'er the lea.

The tinkler tied them neck and heel,
And mony a biting jest gave he:
"O fie, for shame!" said the tinkler lad;
"Siccan fighters I did never see!"

He slit one of their bridle reins—
O, what disgrace the conquered feels!—
And he skelpit the squires with that good tawse,
Till the blood ran off at baith their heels.

The Douglas he was forced to laugh
Till down his cheek the salt tear ran:
"I think the deevil be come here
In the likeness of a tinkler man!"

Then he has to Lord Douglas gone,
And he raised him kindly by the hand,
And he set him on his gallant steed,
And bore him away to Henderland:

"Be not cast down, my Lord Douglas,
Nor writhe beneath a broken bane;
For the leech's art will mend the part,
And your honor lost will spring again.

JAMES HOGG

" 'Tis true, Jock Johnstone is my name;
I'm a right good tinkler, as you see;
For I can crack a casque betimes,
Or clout one, as my need may be.

"Jock Johnstone is my name, 'tis true,
But noble hearts are allied to me;
For I am the lord of Annandale,
And a knight and earl as well as thee."

Then Douglas strained the hero's hand,
And took from it his sword again:
"Since thou art the lord of Annandale,
Thou hast eased my heart of meikle pain.

"I might have known thy noble form
In that disguise thou'rt pleased to wear:
All Scotland knows thy matchless arm,
And England by experience dear.

"We have been foes as well as friends,
And jealous of each other's sway;
But little can I comprehend
Thy motive for these pranks to-day.'

"Sooth, my good lord, the truth to tell,
'Twas I that stole your love away,
And gave her to the lord of Ross
An hour before the break of day;

"For the lord of Ross is my brother,
By all the laws of chivalry;
And I brought with me a thousand men
To guard him to my ain country.

JAMES HOGG

"But I thought meet to stay behind,
And try your lordship to waylay,
Resolved to breed some noble sport,
By leading you so far astray.

"Judging it better some lives to spare—
Which fancy takes me now and then—
And settle our quarrel hand to hand,
Than each with our ten thousand men.

"God send you soon, my Lord Douglas,
To Border foray sound and hail!
But never strike a tinkler again,
If he be a Johnstone of Annandale."

GEORGE CANNING

ENGLAND, 1770-1827

CANNING is better known to fame as a statesman and orator than poet, though even as a schoolboy at Eton he founded a magazine, *The Microcosm*, for the copyright of which a publisher paid him £50, an unprecedented remuneration for a schoolboy performance of the kind. His genius for satire found expression in a publication called *The Anti-Jacobin*, which lashed the "new philosophy" promulgated by the French Republicans, and in occasional verses such as *The Knife-Grinder*. It was Canning who pronounced the famous dictum, in 1822, that "the New World had been called into existence to redress the balance of the Old, and would in time outweigh and topple over the fabrics of kingcraft."

GEORGE CANNING

The Knife-Grinder

A DIALOGUE IN SAPPHICS

FRIEND OF HUMANITY

NEEDY Knife-grinder! whither are you going?
Rough is the road—your wheel is out of order—
Bleak blows the blast; your hat has got a hole in't,
So have your breeches.

"Weary Knife-grinder! little think the proud ones,
Who in their coaches roll along the turnpike-
Road, what hard work 'tis crying all day, 'Knives! and
Scissors to grind O!'

"Tell me, Knife-grinder, how you came to grind knives?
Did some rich man tyrannically use you?
Was it the squire? or parson of the parish?
Or the attorney?

"Was it the squire, for killing of his game? or
Covetous parson, for his tithes distraining?
Or roguish lawyer, made you lose your little
All in a law-suit?

"(Have you not read the *Rights of Man*, by Tom
Paine?)
Drops of compassion tremble on my eyelids,
Ready to fall, as soon as you have told your
Pitiful story."

GEORGE CANNING

KNIFE-GRINDER

"Story! God bless you! I have none to tell, sir.
Only last night, a-drinking at the Chequers,
This poor old hat and breeches, as you see, were
Torn in a scuffle.

"Constables came up for to take me into
Custody; they took me before the justice;
Justice Oldmixon put me in the parish
Stocks for a vagrant.

"I should be glad to drink your Honor's health in
A pot of beer, if you will give me sixpence;
But for my part, I never love to meddle
With politics, sir."

FRIEND OF HUMANITY

"I give thee sixpence! I will see thee damned first—
Wretch! whom no sense of wrongs can rouse to ven-
geance—
Sordid, unfeeling, reprobate, degraded,
Spiritless outcast!"

*(Kicks the Knife-Grinder, overturns his
wheel, and exit in a transport of Republican
enthusiasm and universal philanthropy.)*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

ENGLAND, 1770-1850

THE work of Wordsworth is singularly unequal. When at his best, as in the great *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, *Laodamia*, passages in *The Excursion*, and some of his short pieces, especially his sonnets—in these he rises to heights of noble inspiration and splendor of language. But his poetic fire had to be at fusing point to burst through his natural tendency to prolixity and even dulness. His extraordinary lack of humor led him into a frequent puerility of subject and a mawkish handling that provoked not unjust ridicule, and that long delayed the general recognition of his genius.

As his friend and great appraiser, Coleridge, observed, Wordsworth in his great moments had "the gift of imagination in the highest and strictest sense of the word." Under inspiration he does indeed shed upon these mortal scenes:

"The gleam,
The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration, and the poet's dream."

Wordsworth frequently has marvellous facility of phrase, graphic power of describing natural appearances and effects, and the most ennobling views of life and duty. His most distinguishing characteristic, however, is his sense of the mystic relations between man and nature. He does not see his landscape in minute detail of form and color: his imagination is always interpreting to his emotions the meaning of what he beholds.

His influence upon contemporary and succeeding thought in literature and in life has been profound and lasting—a Sabbath influence. There are moments when the flash

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

of the passing God is upon his soul. Then it is that he rises into his glory. There are poets who outsoar his summits, but there are none who catch just the light that falls from his rift of sky.

From "Lucy"

II.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove,
A Maid whom there were none to praise
And very few to love:

A violet by a mossy stone
Half hidden from the eye!
Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be;
But she is in her grave, and oh,
The difference to me!

IV.

Three years she grew in sun and shower;
Then Nature said, "A lovelier flower
On earth was never sown;
This child I to myself will take;
She shall be mine, and I will make
A lady of my own.

'The stars of midnight shall be dear
To her; and she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Where rivulets dance their wayward round,
And beauty, born of murmuring sound,
Shall pass into her face.'

Thus Nature spake—The work was done—
How soon my Lucy's race was run!
She died, and left to me
This heath, this calm and quiet scene;
The memory of what has been,
And never more will be.

Upon Westminster Bridge

EARTH has not anything to show more fair:
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty:
This City now doth like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning; silent, bare,
Ships, towers, domes, theatres, and temples lie
Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Never did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor valley, rock, or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep!
The river glideth at his own sweet will:
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep;
And all that mighty heart is lying still!

To Toussaint l'Ouverture

TOUSSAINT! the most unhappy man of men!
Whether the whistling rustic tend his plow
Within thy hearing, or thy head be now
Pillowed in some deep dungeon's earless den,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

O miserable chieftain! where and when
Wilt thou find patience? Yet die not; do thou
Wear rather in thy bonds a cheerful brow:
Though fallen thyself, never to rise again,
Live and take comfort. Thou hast left behind
Powers that will work for thee; air, earth, and skies:
There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee; thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind.

From "England, 1802"

i

O FRIEND! I know not which way I must look
For comfort, being, as I am, opprest,
To think that now our life is only drest
For show; mean handy-work of craftsman, cook,
Or groom!—We must run glittering like a brook
In the open sunshine, or we are unblest;
The wealthiest man among us is the best:
No grandeur now in nature or in book
Delights us. Rapine, avarice, expense,
This is idolatry; and these we adore:
Plain living and high thinking are no more:
The homely beauty of the good old cause
Is gone; our peace, our fearful innocence,
And pure religion breathing household laws.

ii

MILTON! thou shouldst be living at this hour:
England hath need of thee: she is a fen
Of stagnant waters: altar, sword and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men:
O raise us up, return to us again,
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power!
Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart;
Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
So didst thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
The lowliest duties on herself did lay.

The Solitary Reaper

BEHOLD her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of to-day?
Some natural sorrow, loss or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

What'er the theme, the maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending;—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

Perfect Woman

"The germ of this poem," Wordsworth tells us, "was four lines composed as a part of the verses on the Highland Girl. Though beginning in this way, it was written from my heart, as is sufficiently obvious."

SHE was a phantom of delight
When first she gleamed upon my sight;
A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;
Like twilight's, too, her dusky hair;
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;
A dancing shape, an image gay,
To haunt, to startle and waylay.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

I saw her upon nearer view,
A Spirit, yet a Woman too!
Her household motions light and free,
And steps of virgin liberty;
A countenance in which did meet
Sweet records, promises as sweet;
A creature not too bright or good
For human nature's daily food;
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine;
A being breathing thoughtful breath,
A traveller betwixt life and death;
The reason firm, the temperate will,
Endurance, foresight, strength and skill;
A perfect Woman, nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort and command;
And yet a Spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light.

Daffodils

I WANDERED lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

Ode to Duty

This fine poem has a slight fault in the first line—a mixed metaphor. A voice has an echo, but hardly a daughter.

STERN Daughter of the Voice of God!
O Duty! if that name thou love
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou, who art victory and law
When empty terrors overawe;
From vain temptations dost set free;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!

There are who ask not if thine eye
Be on them; who, in love and truth,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Where no misgiving is, rely
Upon the genial sense of youth:
Glad Heart! without reproach or blot;
Who do thy work, and know it not:
Oh! if through confidence misplaced
They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power! around them
cast.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security.
And they a blissful course may hold
Even now, who, not unwisely bold,
Live in the spirit of this creed;
Yet seek thy firm support, according to their need.

I, loving freedom, and untried;
No sport of every random gust,
Yet being to myself a guide,
Too blindly have reposed my trust;
And oft, when in my heart was heard
Thy timely mandate, I deferred
The task, in smoother walks to stray;
But thee I now would serve more strictly if I may.

Through no disturbance of my soul,
Or strong compunction in me wrought,
I supplicate for thy control;
But in the quietness of thought:
Me this unchartered freedom tires;
I feel the weight of chance-desires:
My hopes no more must change their name,
I long for a repose that ever is the same.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Stern Lawgiver! yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace:
Nor know we any thing so fair
As is the smile upon thy face:
Flowers laugh before thee on their beds
And fragrance in thy footing treads:
Thou dost preserve the stars from wrong;
And the most ancient heavens, through Thee, are fresh
and strong.

To humbler functions, awful Power!
I call thee: I myself commend
Unto thy guidance from this hour;
Oh, let my weakness have an end!
Give unto me, made lowly wise,
The spirit of self-sacrifice:
The confidence of reason give,
And in the light of truth thy Bondman let me live!

The Rainbow

MY heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

The Sonnet

SCORN not the Sonnet; Critic, you have frowned.
Mindless of its just honors; with this key
Shakespeare unlocked his heart; the melody
Of this small lute gave ease to Petrarch's wound;
A thousand times this pipe did Tasso sound;
With it Camöens soothed an exile's grief;
The Sonnet glittered a gay myrtle leaf
Amid the cypress with which Dante crowned
His visionary brow: a glow-worm lamp,
It cheered mild Spenser, called from Faery-land
To struggle through dark ways; and when a damp
Fell round the path of Milton, in his hand
The Thing became a trumpet; whence he blew
Soul-animating strains—alas, too few!

The World

THE world is too much with us: late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not.—Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Ode

INTIMATIONS OF IMMORTALITY FROM RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

Of this Ode, Wordsworth says, "I do not profess to give a literal representation of the state of the affections and of the moral being in childhood. I record my own feelings at that time—my absolute spirituality, my 'all-soulness,' if I may so speak. At that time I could not believe that I should lie down quietly in the grave, and that my body would moulder into dust."

THERE was a time when meadow, grove, and
stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and the freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it hath been of yore;
Turn wheresoe'er I may,
By night or day,
The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

• The rainbow comes and goes,
And lovely is the rose;
The moon doth with delight
Look round her when the heavens are bare;
Waters on a starry night
Are beautiful and fair;
The sunshine is a glorious birth;
But yet I know, where'er I go,
That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Now, while the birds thus sing a joyous song,
And while the young lambs bound

As to the tabor's sound,

To me alone there came a thought of grief:
A timely utterance gave that thought relief,

And I again am strong:

The cataracts blow their trumpets from the steep;
No more shall grief of mine the season wrong;
I hear the echoes through the mountains throng,
The winds come to me from the fields of sleep,

And all the earth is gay;

Land and sea

Give themselves up to jollity,
And with the heart of May
Doth every beast keep holiday;

Thou Child of Joy,

Shout round me, let me hear thy shouts, thou happy
Shepherd-boy!

Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call

Ye to each other make; I see

The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;

My heart is at your festival,

My head hath its coronal,

The fullness of your bliss, I feel—I feel it all.

O evil day! if I were sullen

While Earth herself is adorning,

This sweet May-morning,

And the children are culling

On every side,

In a thousand valleys far and wide,

Fresh flowers; while the sun shines warm,

And the babe leaps up on his mother's arm—

I hear, I hear, with joy I hear!

—But there's a tree, of many, one,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A single field which I have looked upon,
Both of them speak of something that is gone:

The pansy at my feet

Doth the same tale repeat:

Whither is fled the visionary gleam?

Where is it now, the glory and the dream?

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:

The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,

Hath had elsewhere its setting,

And cometh from afar:

Not in entire forgetfulness,

And not in utter nakedness,

But trailing clouds of glory do we come

From God, who is our home:

Heaven lies about us in our infancy!

Shades of the prison-house begin to close

Upon the growing Boy,

But he beholds the light, and whence it flows,

He sees it in his joy;

The Youth, who daily farther from the east

Must travel, still is Nature's priest,

And by the vision splendid

Is on his way attended;

At length the Man perceives it die away,

And fade into the light of common day.

Earth fills her lap with pleasures of her own;

Yearnings she hath in her own natural kind,

And, even with something of a mother's mind,

And no unworthy aim,

The homely nurse doth all she can

To make her foster-child, her inmate Man,

Forget the glories he hath known,

And that imperial palace whence he came.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Behold the Child among his new-born blisses,
A six years' darling of a pigmy size!
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses,
With light upon him from his father's eyes!
See, at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life,
Shaped by himself with newly-learnèd art;
 A wedding or a festival,
 A mourning or a funeral;
 And this hath now his heart,
And unto this he frames his song:
 Then will he fit his tongue
To dialogues of business, love, or strife;
 But it will not be long
 Ere this be thrown aside,
 And with new joy and pride
The little actor cons another part;
Filling from time to time his "humorous stage"
With all the Persons, down to palsied Age,
That Life brings with her in her equipage;
 As if his whole vocation
 Were endless imitation.

Thou, whose exterior semblance doth belie
 Thy soul's immensity;
Thou best philosopher, who yet dost keep
Thy heritage, thou eye among the blind,
That, deaf and silent, read'st the eternal deep,
Haunted for ever by the eternal mind—
 Mighty prophet! Seer blest!
 On whom those truths do rest,
Which we are toiling all our lives to find,
In darkness lost, the darkness of the grave;
Thou, over whom thy Immortality

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Broods like the Day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by;
 To whom the grave
Is but a lonely bed without the sense or sight
 Of day or the warm light,
A place of thought where we in waiting lie;
Thou little Child, yet glorious in the might
Of heaven-born freedom on thy being's height,
Why with such earnest pains dost thou provoke
The years to bring the inevitable yoke,
Thus blindly with thy blessedness at strife?
Full soon thy soul shall have her earthly freight,
And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life!

 O joy! that in our embers
 Is something that doth live,
 That nature yet remembers
 What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction: not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest—
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest,
With new-fledged hope still fluttering in his breast:
 Not for these I raise
 The song of thanks and praise;
 But for those obstinate questionings
 Of sense and outward things,
 Fallings from us, vanishings;
 Blank misgivings of a Creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our mortal Nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised:

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

But for those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain-light of all our day,
Are yet a master-light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence: truths that wake,
To perish never:
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Nor Man nor Boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence in a season of calm weather
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

Then sing, ye birds, sing, sing a joyous song!
And let the young lambs bound
As to the tabor's sound!
We in thought will join your throng,
Ye that pipe and ye that play,
Ye that through your hearts to-day
Feel the gladness of the May!
What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now for ever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind;

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In the primal sympathy
Which having been must ever be;
In the soothing thoughts that spring
Out of human suffering;
In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.

And O ye Fountains, Meadows, Hills and Groves,
Forebode not any severing of our loves!
Yet in my heart of hearts I feel your might;
I only have relinquished one delight
To live beneath your more habitual sway.
I love the brooks which down their channels fret,
Even more than when I tripped lightly as they;
The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet;
The clouds that gather round the setting sun
Do take a sober coloring from an eye
That hath kept watch o'er man's mortality;
Another race hath been, and other palms are won.
Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
Thanks to its tenderness, its joys and fears,
To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

To the Cuckoo

O BLITHE New-comer! I have heard,
I hear thee and rejoice.
O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird,
Or but a wandering Voice?

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

While I am lying on the grass
Thy twofold shout I hear,
From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near.

Though babbling only to the Vale,
Of sunshine and of flowers,
Thou bringest unto me a tale
Of visionary hours.

Thrice welcome, darling of the Spring!
Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery;

The same whom in my school-boy days
I listened to; that Cry
Which made me look a thousand ways
In bush, and tree, and sky.

To seek thee did I often rove
Through woods and on the green;
And thou were still a hope, a love;
Still longed for, never seen.

And I can listen to thee yet;
Can lie upon the plain
And listen, till I do beget
That golden time again.

O blessèd bird! the earth we pace
Again appears to be
An unsubstantial, faery place;
That is fit home for Thee!

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

From "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Wordsworth says of this poem, which was first published in "The Lyrical Ballads", in 1798: "No poem of mine was composed under circumstances more pleasant for me to remember than this. I began it upon leaving Tintern, after crossing the Wye, and concluded it just as I was entering Bristol in the evening, after a ramble of four or five days, with my sister. Not a line of it was altered, and not any part of it written down till I reached Bristol."

FIVE years have past; five summers, with the
length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur. . . .
These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:
But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burden of the mystery,

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things. . . .

For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognize
In nature and the language of the sense,
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being. . . .

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her: 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy; for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

Yew-Trees

THERE is a Yew-tree, pride of Lorton Vale,
Which to this day stands single, in the midst
Of its own darkness, as it stood of yore;
Not loth to furnish weapons for the bands
Of Umfraville or Percy ere they marched
To Scotland's heaths; or those that crossed the sea
And drew their sounding bows at Azincour,
Perhaps at earlier Crecy, or Poitiers.
Of vast circumference and gloom profound
This solitary Tree! a living thing
Produced too slowly ever to decay;
Of form and aspect too magnificent
To be destroyed. But worthier still of note
Are those fraternal Four of Borrowdale,
Joined in one solemn and capacious grove;
Huge trunks; and each particular trunk a growth
Of intertwined fibres serpentine
Up-coiling, and inveterately convolved;
Nor uninformed with Phantasy, and looks
That threaten the profane—a pillared shade,
Upon whose grassless floor of red-brown hue,
By sheddings from the pining umbrage tinged
Perennially—beneath whose sable roof
Of boughs, as if for festal purpose, decked
With unrejoicing berries—ghostly Shapes
May meet at noontide; Fear and trembling Hope;
Silence and Foresight; Death the Skeleton
And Time the Shadow—there to celebrate,
As in a natural temple scattered o'er
With altars undisturbed of mossy stone,
United worship; or in mute repose
To lie, and listen to the mountain flood
Murmuring from Glaramara's inmost caves.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

SCOTLAND, 1771-1832

THE year 1825 saw Scott at a pinnacle of fame such as no other British man of letters has ever attained during his lifetime. He had for a while (between the publication of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, in 1805, and *The Lady of the Lake*, in 1810) been the most admired poet of his day, and though latterly eclipsed by Byron, he still retained fame as a poet. But his apotheosis came through the publication of the *Waverley Novels*. Then, in 1826, the publishing and printing firms with which he had been connected went into bankruptcy, and Scott found himself at 55 failing in health and involved in liabilities amounting to £130,000. Never was adversity more manfully and gallantly met. He deliberately set himself to pay off his debts with his pen, and his efforts were crowned with marvellous success.

Scott's poetry, though not of a lofty imaginative order, has ever appealed most strongly to youthful and high-hearted readers. He is not the poet, and never can be, of those who love the Keatsian and Shelleyan beauty. The student and the artist remember his tales in verse as cherished enchantments of their youth, but do not recur to them. However, he must be recognized as the great modern troubadour, a high-hearted minstrel.

O Woman! In Our Hours of Ease

O WOMAN! in our hours of ease,
Uncertain, coy, and hard to please,
And variable as the shade
By the light quivering aspen made;
When pain and anguish wring the brow,
A ministering angel thou!

Lochinvar

OH! young Lochinvar is come out of the west,
Through all the wide Border his steed was the
best;

And save his good broadsword he weapons had none,
He rode all unarmed and he rode all alone.
So faithful in love and so dauntless in war,
There never was knight like the young Lochinvar.

He stayed not for brake and he stopped not for stone,
He swam the Eske river where ford there was none;
But ere he alighted at Netherby gate
The bride had consented, the gallant came late:
For a laggard in love and a dastard in war
Was to wed the fair Ellen of brave Lochinvar.

So boldly he entered the Netherby Hall,
Among bridesmen, and kinsmen, and brothers, and all:
Then spoke the bride's father, his hand on his sword,
For the poor craven bridegroom said never a word,
"Oh! come ye in peace here, or come ye in war,
Or to dance at our bridal, young Lord Lochinvar?"

"I long wooed your daughter, my suit you denied;
Love swells like the Solway, but ebbs like its tide—
And now am I come, with this lost love of mine,
To lead but one measure, drink one cup of wine.
There are maidens in Scotland more lovely by far,
That would gladly be bride to the young Lochinvar."

The bride kissed the goblet; the knight took it up,
He quaffed off the wine, and he threw down the cup.
She looked down to blush, and she looked up to sigh,

SIR WALTER SCOTT

With a smile on her lips and a tear in her eye.
He took her soft hand ere her mother could bar—
“Now tread we a measure!” said young Lochinar.

So stately his form, and so lovely her face,
That never a hall such a galliard did grace;
While her mother did fret, and her father did fume,
And the bridegroom stood dangling his bonnet and
plume;
And the bride-maidens whispered, “’Twere better by
far
To have matched our fair cousin with young Lochinvar.”

One touch to her hand and one word in her ear,
When they reached the hall-door, and the charger stood
near;
So light to the croupe the fair lady he swung,
So light to the saddle before her he sprung!
“She is won! we are gone, over bank, bush, and scaur;
They’ll have fleet steeds that follow,” quoth young
Lochinvar.

There was mounting ’mong Græmes of the Netherby
clan;
Forsters, Fenwicks, and Musgraves, they rode and they
ran:
There was racing and chasing on Cannobie Lee,
But the lost bride of Netherby ne’er did they see.
So daring in love and so dauntless in war,
Have ye e’er heard of gallant like young Lochinvar?

Brignall Banks

During the composition of "Rokeby" Scott wrote to a friend: "There are two or three songs, and particularly one in praise of Brignall banks, which I trust you will like—because, entre nous, I like them myself. One of them is a little dashing banditti song, called and entitled 'Allen-a-Dale.'"

O H, BRIGNALL banks are wild and fair,
 And Greta woods are green,
 And you may gather garlands there
 Would grace a summer queen.
 And as I rode by Dalton-hall,
 Beneath the turrets high,
 A maiden on the castle wall
 Was singing merrily:
 "Oh, Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there
 Than reign our English queen."

"If, maiden, thou wouldst wend with me,
 To leave both tower and town,
 Thou first must guess what life lead we
 That dwell by dale and down.
 And if thou canst that riddle read,
 As read full well you may,
 Then to the greenwood shalt thou speed,
 As blithe as Queen of May."
 Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
 And Greta woods are green;
 I'd rather rove with Edmund there
 Than reign our English queen."

SIR WALTER SCOTT

"I read you, by your bugle horn,
And by your palfrey good,
I read you for a ranger sworn
To keep the king's greenwood."
"A ranger, lady, winds his horn,
And 'tis at peep of light;
His blast is heard at merry morn,
And mine at dead of night."
Yet sung she, "Brignall banks are fair,
And Greta woods are gay;
I would I were with Edmund there,
To reign his Queen of May!

"With burnished brand and musketoon
So gallantly you come,
I read you for a bold dragoon,
That lists the tuck of drum."
"I list no more the tuck of drum,
No more the trumpet hear;
But when the beetle sounds his hum,
My comrades take the spear.
And oh, though Brignall banks be fair,
And Greta woods be gay,
Yet mickle must the maiden dare
Would reign my Queen of May!

"Maiden! a nameless life I lead,
A nameless death I'll die;
The fiend whose lantern lights the mead
Were better mate than I!
And when I'm with my comrades met
Beneath the greenwood bough,
What once we were we all forget,
Nor think what we are now.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Yet Brignall banks are fresh and fair,
And Greta woods are green,
And you may gather garlands there
Would grace a summer queen."

Allen-a-Dale

A LLEN-A-DALE has no fagot for burning,
Allen-a-Dale has no furrow for turning,
Allen-a-Dale has no fleece for the spinning,
Yet Allen-a-Dale has red gold for the winning.
Come, read me my riddle! come, hearken my tale!
And tell me the craft of bold Allen-a-Dale.

The Baron of Ravensworth prances in pride,
And he views his domains upon Arkindale side.
The mere for his net and the land for his game,
The chase for the wild and the park for the tame:
Yet the fish of the lake and the deer of the vale
Are less free to Lord Dacre than Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale was ne'er belted a knight,
Though his spur be as sharp and his blade be as bright;
Allen-a-Dale is no baron or lord,
Yet twenty tall yeomen will draw at his word;
And the best of our nobles his bonnet will vail,
Who at Rere-cross on Stanmore meets Allen-a-Dale!

Allen-a-Dale to his wooing is come;
The mother, she asked of his household and home:
"Though the castle of Richmond stand fair on the hill,
My hall," quoth bold Allen, "shows gallanter still;
'Tis the blue vault of heaven, with its crescent so pale
And with all its bright spangles!" said Allen-a-Dale.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

The father was steel and the mother was stone;
They lifted the latch and they bade him be gone;
But loud on the morrow their wail and their cry:
He had laughed on the lass with his bonny black eye,
And she fled to the forest to hear a love-tale,
And the youth it was told by was Allen-a-dale!

Soldier, Rest! Thy Warfare O'er

FROM "THE LADY OF THE LAKE"

SOLDIER, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battled fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing,
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more;
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking.

No rude sound shall reach thine ear,
Armor's clang, or war-steed champing,
Trump nor pibroch summon here
Mustering clan or squadron tramping.
Yet the lark's shrill fife may come
At the daybreak from the fallow,
And the bittern sound his drum,
Booming from the sedgy shallow.
Ruder sounds shall none be near,
Guards nor warders challenge here,

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Here's no war-steed's neigh and champing,
Shouting clans or squadrons stamping.

Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
While our slumbrous spells assail ye,
Dream not, with the rising sun,
Bugles here shall sound reveillé.
Sleep! the deer is in his den;
Sleep! thy hounds are by thee lying:
Sleep! nor dream in yonder glen
How thy gallant steed lay dying.
Huntsman, rest! thy chase is done;
Think not of the rising sun,
For at dawning to assail ye
Here no bugles sound reveillé.

Hail to the Chief, Who in Triumph Advances!

FROM "THE LADY OF THE LAKE"

HAIL to the Chief who in triumph advances!
Honored and blessed be the ever-green Pine!
Long may the tree, in his banner that glances,
Flourish the shelter and grace of our line!
Heaven send it happy dew,
Earth lend it sap anew,
Gayly to burgeon and broadly to grow,
While every Highland glen
Sends our shout back again,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

* * * * *

Row, vassals, row, for the pride of the Highlands!
Stretch to your oars for the ever-green Pine!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

O that the rosebud that graces yon islands
Were wreathed in a garland around him to twine!
O that some seedling gem,
Worthy such noble stem
Honored and blessed in their shadow might grow!
Loud should Clan-Alpine then
Ring from her deepmost glen,
"Roderigh Vich Alpine dhu, ho! ieroe!"

Sound, Sound the Clarion

SOUND, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
To all the sensual world proclaim,
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.

Proud Maisie

PROUD Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early;
Sweet Robin sits on the bush,
Singing so rarely.

"Tell me, thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?"

"When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry ye."

"Who makes the bridal bed,
Birdie, say truly?"

"The grey-headed sexton
That delves the grave duly.

SIR WALTER SCOTT

"The glow-worm o'er grave and stone
Shall light thee steady;
The owl from the steeple sing
Welcome, proud lady!"

Patriotism

BREATHES there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there breathe, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living, shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonored and unsung.

Pitt and Fox

Referring, of course, to the eminent British statesmen, William Pitt (the Younger) and Charles James Fox.

NEVER held marble in its trust
Of two such wondrous men the dust.
With more than mortal powers endowed.
How high they soared above the crowd!

SIR WALTER SCOTT

Theirs was no common party race,
Jostling by dark intrigue for place;
Like fabled gods, their mighty war
Shook realms and nations in its jar;
Beneath each banner proud to stand,
Looked up the noblest of the land,
Till through the British world were known
The names of PITT and FOX alone.
Spells of such force no wizard grave
E'er framed in dark Thessalian cave,
Though his could drain the ocean dry,
And force the planets from the sky.
These spells are spent, and, spent with these,
The wine of life is on the lees.
Genius and taste and talent gone,
For ever tombed beneath the stone,
Where—taming thought to human pride
The mighty chiefs sleep side by side.
Drop upon FOX's grave the tear,
'Twill trickle to his rival's bier;
O'er PITT's the mournful requiem sound,
And FOX's shall the notes rebound.
The solemn echo seems to cry:
"Here let their discord with them die.
Speak not for those a separate doom
Whom fate made brothers in the tomb;
But search the land of living men,
Where wilt thou find their like agen?"

County Guy

AH! County Guy, the hour is nigh,
The sun has left the lea,
The orange-flower perfumes the bower,
The breeze is on the sea.
The lark, his lay who trilled all day,
Sits hushed his partner nigh;
Breeze, bird and flower, confess the hour,
But where is County Guy?

The village maid steals through the shade,
Her shepherd's suit to hear;
To beauty shy, by lattice high,
Sings high-born Cavalier.
The star of Love, all stars above,
Now reigns o'er earth and sky;
And high and low the influence know—
But where is County Guy?

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

ENGLAND, 1772-1834

As a poet of the first order, the place of Coleridge is immovable. Because of some half dozen miracles in poetry, his place is indeed "high among the highest of all time", says Swinburne, adding: "An age that should forget or neglect Coleridge might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. . . . That may be said of him which can hardly be said of any but the greatest among men; that come what may to the world in course of time, it will never see his place filled. . . . For height and perfection of imaginative quality he is the greatest of lyric poets."

Ten years after the death of Coleridge, Leigh Hunt observed: "His poetry is so beautiful, and it was so quietly content with its beauty, making no call on the critics, and receiving hardly any notice, that people are only now beginning to awake to a full sense of its merits. Of pure poetry, strictly so called, consisting of nothing but its essential self, without conventional and perishing helps, he was the greatest master of his time."

About 1796 Coleridge contracted the habit of taking laudanum, which had such disastrous effects upon his character and powers of will. Coincidentally *Poems on Various Subjects* appeared, and a little later his *Ode to the Departing Year*. At this period he lived in Somerset, with William Wordsworth for a neighbor. There Coleridge wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, the first part of *Christabel*, and *Kubla Khan*; and there he joined with Wordsworth in producing their epoch-making *Lyrical Ballads*.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

In 1798, Josiah and Thomas Wedgwood, the great pottery makers and patrons of arts and letters, gave Coleridge an annuity of £150 on condition that he devote himself to literature. His last poetic production of consequence was the second part of *Christabel*, written in 1800. Soon after this his health failed, and, whether as the cause or the consequence of his suffering, he became a slave to opium. Thereafter he drifted from place to place, living with various friends. *Christabel* and *Kubla Kahn* were published in 1816, followed in 1817 by *Biographia Literaria*, *Sybilline Leaves* and an autobiography. His life thenceforth was a splendid wreck.

The Rime of the Ancient Mariner

I give here the text of 1829 of this astonishing production. It is Coleridge's final version, the result of several revisions, most of which are improvements over the first text of 1798. Instead of the third stanza, for instance, the original text has the two following:

But still he holds the wedding-guest—

“There was a Ship,” quoth he—

*“Nay, if thou’st got a laughsome tale,
Marinere! come with me.”*

He holds him with his skinny hand,

Quoth he, “There was a Ship—”

*“Now get thee hence, thou gray-beard Loon!
Or my Staff shall make thee skip.”*

The poem relates how a ship having passed the Line was driven by storms to the cold country towards the South Pole; and how from thence she made her course to the tropical latitude of the Great Pacific Ocean; and of the strange things that befell; and in what manner the ancient Mariner came back to his own country.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART I

IT is an ancient Mariner,
And he stoppeth one of three.
"By thy long gray beard and glittering eye,
Now wherefore stopp'st thou me?"

The Bridegroom's doors are opened wide,
And I am next of kin;
The guests are met, the feast is set:
May'st hear the merry din."

He holds him with his skinny hand,
"There was a ship," quoth he.
"Hold off! unhand me, gray-beard loon!"
Eftsoons his hand dropt he.

He holds him with his glittering eye—
The Wedding-Guest stood still,
And listens like a three years' child:
The Mariner hath his will.

The Wedding-Guest sat on a stone:
He cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"The ship was cheered, the harbor cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the lighthouse top.

The Mariner
tells how the
ship sailed
southward
with a good
wind and
fair weather,
till it
reached
the Line.

The Sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he!
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Higher and higher every day,
Till over the mast at noon—"The Wedding-Guest here beat his breast,
For he heard the loud bassoon.

The bride hath paced into the hall,
Red as a rose is she:
Nodding their heads before her goes
The merry minstrelsy.

The Wedding-Guest
heareth
the bridal
music; but
the Mariner
continueth
his tale.

The Wedding-Guest he beat his breast,
Yet he cannot choose but hear;
And thus spake on that ancient man,
The bright-eyed Mariner.

"And now the Storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong:
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.

The ship
drawn by
a storm
toward the
South Pole.

With sloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursued with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled.

And now there came both mist and snow,
And it grew wondrous cold:
And ice, mast-high, came floating by,
As green as emerald.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The land of
ice, and
of fearful
sounds,
where no
living thing
was to be
seen.

And through the drifts the snowy clifts
Did send a dismal sheen:
Nor shapes of men nor beasts we ken—
The ice was all between.

The ice was here, the ice was there,
The ice was all around:
It cracked and growled, and roared and
howled,
Like noises in a swound!

Till a great
sea-bird,
called the
Albatross,
came
through the
snow-fog,
and was re-
ceived with
great joy
and hos-
pitality.

At length did cross an Albatross,
Through the fog it came;
As if it had been a Christian soul,
We hailed it in God's name.

It ate the food it ne'er had eat,
And round and round it flew.
The ice did split with a thunder-fit;
The helmsman steered us through!

And lo! the
Albatross
proveth a
bird of good
omen, and
followeth
the ship as
it returneth
northward
through fog
and floating
ice.

And a good south wind sprung up behind;
The Albatross did follow,
And every day, for food or play,
Came to the mariners' hollo!

In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
It perched for vespers nine;
Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke
white,
Glimmered the white moonshine."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"God save thee, ancient Mariner,
From the fiends, that plague thee thus!
Why look'st thou so?"—"With my cross-
bow
I shot the Albatross.

The ancient
Mariner in-
hospitably
killeth the
pious bird
of good
omen.

PART II

"The Sun now rose upon the right:
Out of the sea came he,
Still hid in mist, and on the left
Went down into the sea.

And the good south wind still blew behind,
But no sweet bird did follow,
Nor any day for food or play
Came to the mariners' hollo!

And I had done a hellish thing,
And it would work 'em woe:
For all averred I had killed the bird
That made the breeze to blow.
Ah wretch! said they, the bird to slay,
That made the breeze to blow!

His ship-
mates cry out
against the
ancient Mari-
ner for kill-
ing the bird
of good luck.

Nor dim nor red, like God's own head,
The glorious Sun uprist:
Then all averred I had killed the bird
That brought the fog and mist.
'Twas right, said they, such birds to slay,
That bring the fog and mist.

But when the
fog cleared
off, they
justify the
same, and
thus make
themselves
accomplices
in the crime.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The fair
breeze con-
tinues; the
ship enters
the Pacific
Ocean, and
sails north-
ward, even
till it reaches
the Line.

The ship hath
been suddenly
becalmed.

The fair breeze blew, the white foam flew,
The furrow followed free;
We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea.

Down dropt the breeze, the sails dropt down,
'Twas sad as sad could be;
And we did speak only to break
The silence of the sea!

All in a hot and copper sky,
The bloody Sun, at noon,
Right up above the mast did stand,
No bigger than the Moon.

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, nor breath nor motion;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

And the Al-
batross be-
gins to be
avenged.

Water, water, everywhere,
And all the boards did shrink;
Water, water, everywhere,
Nor any drop to drink.

The very deep did rot: O Christ!
That ever this should be!
Yea, slimy things did crawl with legs
Upon the slimy sea.

About, about, in reel and rout
The death-fires danced at night;
The water, like a witch's oils,
Burnt green and blue and white.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And some in dreams assurèd were
Of the Spirit that plagued us so;
Nine fathom deep he had followed us
From the land of mist and snow.

A Spirit had
followed
them; one of
the invisible
inhabitants
of this planet,
neither de-
parted souls
nor angels;

concerning whom the learned Jew, Josephus, and the Platonic Constantinopolitan, Michael Psellus, may be consulted. They are very numerous, and there is no climate or element without one or more.

And every tongue, through utter drought,
Was withered at the root:
We could not speak, no more than if
We had been choked with soot.

Ah! well-a-day! what evil looks
Had I from old and young!
Instead of the cross, the Albatross
About my neck was hung.

The shipmates
in their sore
distress,
would fain
throw the
whole guilt
on the ancient
Mariner: in
sign whereof
they hang the
dead sea-bird
round his
neck.

PART III

"There passed a weary time. Each throat
Was parched, and glazed each eye.
A weary time! a weary time!
How glazed each weary eye!
When looking westward, I beheld
A something in the sky.

The ancient
Mariner be-
holdeth a sign
in the ele-
ment afar off.

At first it seemed a little speck,
And then it seemed a mist;
It moved and moved, and took at last
A certain shape, I wist.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A speck, a mist, a shape, I wist!
And still it neared and neared:
As if it dodged a water-sprite,
It plunged and tacked and veered.

At its nearer
approach, it
seemeth him
to be a ship;
and at a dear
ransom he
freeth his
speech from
the bonds of
thirst.

With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
We could nor laugh nor wail;
Through utter drought all dumb we stood!
I bit my arm, I sucked the blood,
And cried, A sail! a sail!

A flash of
joy.

With throats unslaked, with black lips
baked,
Agape they heard me call:
Gramercy! they for joy did grin,
And all at once their breath drew in,
As they were drinking all.

And horror
follows. For
can it be a
ship that
comes on-
ward without
wind or tide?

See! see! (I cried) she tacks no more!
Hither to work us weal—
Without a breeze, without a tide,
She steadies with upright keel!

The western wave was all aflame,
The day was wellnigh done!
Almost upon the western wave
Rested the broad, bright Sun;
When that strange shape drove suddenly
Betwixt us and the Sun.

It seemeth
him but the
skeleton of
a ship.

And straight the Sun was flecked with bars
(Heaven's Mother send us grace!),
As if through a dungeon-grate he peered
With broad and burning face.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Alas! (thought I, and my heart beat loud)
How fast she nears and nears!
Are those her sails that glance in the Sun,
Like restless gossameres?

Are those her ribs through which the Sun
Did peer, as through a grate?
And is that Woman all her crew?
Is that a Death? and are there two?
Is Death that Woman's mate?

Her lips were red, her looks were free,
Her locks were yellow as gold:
Her skin was as white as leprosy,
The Nightmare Life-in-Death was she,
Who thicks man's blood with cold.

The naked hulk alongside came,
And the twain were casting dice:
"The game is done! I've won! I've won!"
Quoth she, and whistles thrice.

The Sun's rim dips; the stars rush out,
At one stride comes the dark:
With far-heard whisper, o'er the sea,
Off shot the spectre-bark.

We listened and looked sideways up!
Fear at my heart, as at a cup,
My life-blood seemed to sip!
The stars were dim, and thick the night,
The steersman's face by his lamp gleamed
white;
From the sails the dew did drip—

And its ribs
are seen as
bars on the
face of the
setting Sun.
The Spectre-
Woman and
her Death-
mate, and no
other, on
board the
skeleton ship.
Like vessel,
like crew!

Death and
Life-in-Death
have diced
for the ship's
crew, and she
(the latter)
winneth the
ancient
Mariner.

No twilight
within the
courts of the
Sun.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

At the rising
of the Moon, Till clomb above the eastern bar
The hornèd Moon, with one bright star
Within the nether tip.

One after
another, One after one, by the star-dogged Moon,
Too quick for groan or sigh,
Each turned his face with a ghastly pang,
And cursed me with his eye.

His shipmates
drop down
dead. Four times fifty living men
(And I heard nor sigh nor groan),
With heavy thump, a lifeless lump,
They dropped down one by one.

But Life-in-
Death begins
her work on
the ancient
Mariner. The souls did from their bodies fly—
They fled to bliss or woe!
And every soul, it passed me by
Like the whizz of my crossbow!"

PART IV

The Wedding-
Guest feareth
that a spirit
is talking to
him. "I fear thee, ancient Mariner!
I fear thy skinny hand!
And thou art long, and lank and brown,
As is the ribbed sea-sand."¹

But the an-
cient Mariner
assureth him
of his bodily
life, and pro-
ceedeth to re-
late his hor-
rible penance. I fear thee and thy glittering eye,
And thy skinny hand so brown."—
"Fear not, fear not, thou Wedding-Guest!
This body dropt not down.

Alone, alone, all, all alone,
Alone on a wide, wide sea!

¹ Coleridge says that for the last two lines here he was indebted to Wordsworth.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony.

The many men, so beautiful!
And they all dead did lie;
And a thousand thousand slimy things
Lived on, and so did I.
I looked upon the rotting sea,
And drew my eyes away:
I looked upon the rotting deck,
And there the dead men lay.

He despiseth
the creatures
of the calm.

I looked to heaven, and tried to pray;
But or ever a prayer had gusht,
A wicked whisper came, and made
My heart as dry as dust.

And envieth
that they
should live,
and so many
lie dead.

I closed my lids, and kept them close,
And the balls like pulses beat;
For the sky and the sea, and the sea and the
sky,
Lay like a load on my weary eye,
And the dead were at my feet.

The cold sweat melted from their limbs,
Nor rot nor reek did they:
The look with which they looked on me
Had never passed away.

But the curse
liveth for him
in the eye of
the dead men.

An orphan's curse would drag to hell
A spirit from on high;
But oh! more horrible than that
Is the curse in a dead man's eye!
Seven days, seven nights, I saw that curse,
And yet I could not die.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

In his loneliness and
fixedness he
yearneth
towards the
journeying
Moon, and

the stars that still sojourn, yet still move onward; and everywhere the blue sky belongs to them, and is their appointed rest and their native country and their own natural homes, which they enter unannounced, as lords that are certainly expected, and yet there is a silent joy at their arrival.

The moving Moon went up the sky,
And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside—

Her beams bemoaned the sultry main,
Like April hoar-frost spread;
But where the ship's huge shadow lay,
The charmed water burnt away
A still and awful red.

By the light
of the Moon
he beholdeth
God's creatures of the
great calm.

Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water-snakes:
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared, the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes.

Within the shadow of the ship
I watched their rich attire:
Blue, glossy green, and velvet black,
They coiled and swam; and every track
Was a flash of golden fire.

Their beauty
and their
happiness.

He blesteth
them in his
heart.

O happy living things! no tongue
Their beauty might declare:
A spring of love gushed from my heart,
And I blessed them unaware:
Sure my kind saint took pity on me,
And I blessed them unaware.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The selfsame moment I could pray;
And from my neck so free
The Albatross fell off, and sank
Like lead into the sea.

The spell
begins to
break.

PART V

"O sleep! it is a gentle thing,
Beloved from pole to pole!
To Mary Queen the praise be given!
She sent the gentle sleep from Heaven,
That slid into my soul.

The silly buckets on the deck,
That had so long remained,
I dreamt that they were filled with dew;
And when I awoke, it rained.

By grace of
the holy
Mother, the
ancient
Mariner is
refreshed
with rain.

My lips were wet, my throat was cold,
My garments all were dank;
Sure I had drunken in my dreams,
And still my body drank.

I moved, and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light—almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessèd ghost.

And soon I heard a roaring wind:
It did not come anear;
But with its sound it shook the sails,
That were so thin and sere.

He heareth
sounds and
seeth strange
sights and
commotions in
the sky and
the element.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The upper air burst into life;
And a hundred fire-flags sheen;
To and fro they were hurried about!
And to and fro, and in and out,
The wan stars danced between.

And the coming wind did roar more loud,
And the sails did sigh like sedge;
And the rain poured down from one black
cloud;
The Moon was at its edge.

The thick black cloud was cleft, and still
The Moon was at its side;
Like waters shot from some high crag,
The lightning fell with never a jag,
A river steep and wide.

The bodies of
the ship's
crew are in-
spired; and
the ship
moves on;

The loud wind never reached the ship,
Yet now the ship moved on!
Beneath the lightning and the Moon
The dead men gave a groan.

They groaned, they stirred, they all uprose,
Nor spake, nor moved their eyes;
It had been strange, even in a dream,
To have seen those dead men rise.

The helmsman steered, the ship moved on;
Yet never a breeze up-blew;
The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
Where they were wont to do;
They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
We were a ghastly crew.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The body of my brother's son
Stood by me, knee to knee:
The body and I pulled at one rope,
But he said naught to me."

But not by
the souls of
the men, nor
by demons of
earth or mid-
dle air, but
by a blessed
troop of an-
gelic spirits,
sent down by
the invocation
of the guard-
ian saint.

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
"Be calm, thou Wedding-Guest:
'Twas not those souls that fled in pain,
Which to their corpses came again,
But a troop of spirits blest:¹

For when it dawned—they dropped their
arms,
And clustered round the mast;
Sweet sounds rose slowly through their
mouths,
And from their bodies passed.

Around, around, flew each sweet sound,
Then darted to the Sun;
Slowly the sounds came back again,
Now mixed, now one by one.

¹ It seems to me here that Coleridge misses a fine opportunity for dramatic terror. These mariners might better be the dead come back—not "a troop of spirits blest." It may be thought presumptuous to revise the work of a master; nevertheless, even a mouse has sometimes the daring to nibble at great foundations. Here is my suggested change—my "nibble" at this Coleridge pillar:

"I fear thee, ancient Mariner!"
Yes, strange it was indeed:
They were the souls that had fled in pain,
Who to their bodies came again—
Came in the hour of need—
Came in the dying of our hopes
To help us pull the straining ropes.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Sometimes a-dropping from the sky
I heard the skylark sing;
Sometimes all little birds that are,
How they seemed to fill the sea and air
With their sweet jargoning!

And now 'twas like all instruments
Now like a lonely flute;
And now it is an angel's song,
That makes the Heavens be mute.

It ceased; yet still the sails made on
A pleasant noise till noon,
A noise like of a hidden brook
In the leafy month of June,
That to the sleeping woods all night
Singeth a quiet tune.

Till noon we quietly sailed on,
Yet never a breeze did breathe:
Slowly and smoothly went the ship,
Moved onward from beneath.

The lonesome
Spirit from
the South
Pole carries
on the ship as
far as the
Line, in obe-
dience to the
angelic troop,
but still
requireth
vengeance

Under the keel nine fathom deep,
From the land of mist and snow,
The Spirit slid: and it was he
That made the ship to go.
The sails at noon left off their tune,
And the ship stood still also.

The Sun, right up above the mast,
Had fixed her to the ocean;
But in a minute she 'gan stir,
With a short uneasy motion—

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Backwards and forwards half her length
With a short uneasy motion.

Then like a pawing horse let go,
She made a sudden bound;
It flung the blood into my head,
And I fell down in a swoond.

How long in that same fit I lay,
I have not to declare;
But ere my living life returned,
I heard, and in my soul discerned
Two voices in the air.

'Is it he?' quoth one, 'is this the man?
By Him who died on cross,
With his cruel bow he laid full low
The harmless Albatross.

The Spirit who bideth by himself
In the land of mist and snow,
He loved the bird that loved the man
Who shot him with his bow.'

The other was a softer voice,
As soft as honey-dew:
Quoth he, 'The man hath penance done,
And penance more will do.'

The Polar
Spirit's fel-
low-demons,
the invisible
inhabitants of
the element,
take part in
his wrong;
and two of
them relate,
one to the
other, that
penance long
and heavy for
the ancient
Mariner hath
been accorded
to the Polar
Spirit, who
returneth
southward.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

PART VI

First Voice:

'But tell me, tell me! speak again,
Thy soft response renewing—
What makes that ship drive on so fast?
What is the Ocean doing?'

Second Voice:

'Still as a slave before his lord,
The Ocean hath no blast;
His great bright eye most silently
Up to the Moon is cast—

If he may know which way to go;
For she guides him smooth or grim.
See, brother, see! how graciously
She looked down on him.'

The Mariner
hath been cast
into a trance;
for the angelic
power causeth
the vessel to
drive north-
ward faster
than human
life could
endure.

First Voice:

'But why drives on that ship so fast,
Without or wave or wind?'

Second Voice:

'The air is cut away before,
And closes from behind.

'Fly, brother, fly! more high, more high!
Or we shall be belated:
For slow and slow that ship will go,
When the Mariner's trance is abated.'

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

I woke, and we were sailing on
As in a gentle weather:

'Twas night, calm night, the Moon was
high;

The dead men stood together.

The supernatural motion is retarded; the Mariner awakes, and his penance begins anew.

All stood together on the deck,
For a charnel-dungeon fitter:
All fixed on me their stony eyes,
That in the Moon did glitter.

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never passed away:
I could not draw my eyes from theirs,
Nor turn them up to pray.

And now this spell was snapt: once more
I viewed the ocean green,
And looked far forth, yet little saw
Of what had else been seen—

The curse is finally expiated.

Like one that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turned round, walks on,
And turns no more his head;
Because he knows a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.

But soon there breathed a wind on me,
Nor sound nor motion made:
Its path was not upon the sea,
In ripple or in shade.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

It raised my hair, it fanned my cheek
Like a meadow-gale of spring—
It mingled strangely with my fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming.

Swiftly, swiftly flew the ship,
Yet she sailed softly too:
Sweetly, sweetly blew the breeze—
On me alone it blew.

And the an-
cient Mariner
beholdeth his
native
country.

O dream of joy! is this indeed
The lighthouse top I see?
Is this the hill? is this the kirk?
Is this mine own countree?

We drifted o'er the harbor-bar,
And I with sobs did pray—
O let me be awake, my God!
Or let me sleep away.

The harbor-bay was clear as glass,
So smoothly it was strewn!
And on the bay the moonlight lay,
And the shadow of the Moon.

The rock shone bright, the kirk no less
That stands above the rock:
The moonlight steeped in silentness
The steady weathercock.

The angelic
spirits leave
the dead
bodies,

And the bay was white with silent light
Till rising from the same,
Full many shapes, that shadows were,
In crimson colors came.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A little distance from the prow
Those crimson shadows were:
I turned my eyes upon the deck—
O Christ! what saw I there!

And appear
in their own
forms of light.

Each corse lay flat, lifeless and flat,
And, by the holy rood!
A man all light, a seraph-man,
On every corse there stood.

This seraph-band, each waved his hand:
It was a heavenly sight!
They stood as signals to the land,
Each one a lovely light;

This seraph-band, each waved his hand,
No voice did they impart—
No voice; but O, the silence sank
Like music on my heart.

But soon I heard the dash of oars,
I heard the Pilot's cheer;
My head was turned perforce away,
And I saw a boat appear.

The Pilot and the Pilot's boy,
I heard them coming fast:
Dear Lord in Heaven! it was a joy
The dead men could not blast.

I saw a third—I heard his voice:
It is the Hermit good!
He singeth loud his godly hymns
That he makes in the wood.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

He'll shrieve my soul, he'll wash away
The Albatross's blood.

PART VII

The Hermit
of the Wood.

"This hermit good lives in that wood
Which slopes down to the sea.
How loudly his sweet voice he rears!
He loves to talk with marineres
That come from a far countree.

He kneels at morn, and noon, and eve—
He hath a cushion plump:
It is the moss that wholly hides
The rotted old oak-stump.

The skiff-boat neared: I heard them talk,
'Why, this is strange, I trow!
Where are those lights so many and fair,
That signal made but now?'

Approacheth
the ship with
wonder.

'Strange, by my faith!' the Hermit said—
'And they answered not our cheer!
The planks look warped! and see those sails,
How thin they are and sere!
I never saw aught like to them,
Unless perchance it were

Brown skeletons of leaves that lag
My forest-brook along;
When the ivy-tod is heavy with snow,
And the owlet whoops to the wolf below,
That eats the she-wolf's young.'

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Dear Lord! it hath a fiendish look—'

(The Pilot made reply)

'I am a-feared.'—'Push on, push on!'

Said the Hermit cheerily.

The boat came closer to the ship,

But I nor spake nor stirred:

The boat came close beneath the ship,

And straight a sound was heard.

The ship suddenly sinketh.

Under the water it rumbled on,

Still louder and more dread:

It reached the ship, it split the bay;

The ship went down like lead.

The ancient Mariner is saved in the Pilot's boat.

Stunned by that loud and dreadful sound,

Which sky and ocean smote,

Like one that hath been seven days drowned

My body lay afloat;

But swift as dreams, myself I found

Within the Pilot's boat.

Upon the whirl, where sank the ship,

The boat spun round and round;

And all was still, save that the hill

Was telling of the sound.

I moved my lips—the Pilot shrieked

And fell down in a fit:

The holy Hermit raised his eyes,

And prayed where he did sit.

I took the oars: the Pilot's boy,

Who now doth crazy go,

Laughed loud and long, and all the while

His eyes went to and fro.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Ha! ha!' quoth he, 'full plain I see
The Devil knows how to row.'

And now, all in my own countree,
I stood on the firm land!
The Hermit stepped forth from the boat,
And scarcely he could stand.

The ancient
Mariner
earnestly en-
treateth the
Hermit to
shrieve him;
and the pen-
ance of life
falls on him.

'O shrieve me, shrieve me, holy man!'
The Hermit crossed his brow.
'Say quick,' quoth he, 'I bid thee say—
What manner of man art thou?'

Forthwith this frame of mine was wrenched
With a woful agony,
Which forced me to begin my tale;
And then it left me free.

And ever
and anon
throughout
his future life
an agony
constraineth
him to travel
from land to
land;

Since, then, at an uncertain hour,
That agony returns:
And till my ghastly tale is told,
This heart within me burns.

I pass, like night, from land to land;
I have strange power of speech;
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I teach.¹

¹ The word teach seems a forced word in this place—not an inevitable rhyme. Every rhyme should seem to be exactly suited to the place. Again I venture to suggest a possible change in the Coleridge diction:

I pass like night from land to land:
My words have power and spell.
That moment that his face I see,
I know the man that must hear me:
To him my tale I tell.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

What loud uproar bursts from that door!
The wedding-guests are there;
But in the garden-bower the bride
And the bride-maids singing are:
And hark, the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer!

O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been
Alone on a wide, wide sea:
So lonely 'twas, that God Himself
Scarce seemèd there to be.

O sweeter than the marriage-feast,
'Tis sweeter far to me,
To walk together to the kirk
With a goodly company!

To walk together to the kirk,
And all together pray,
While each to his great Father bends,
Old men, and babes and loving friends,
And youths and maidens gay!

Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou Wedding-Guest!
He prayeth well, who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

And to teach,
by his own
example,
love and rev-
erence to
all things
that God
made and
loveth.

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The Mariner, whose eye is bright,
Whose beard with age is hoar,
Is gone: and now the Wedding-Guest
Turned from the bridegroom's door.

He went like one that hath been stunned,
And is of sense forlorn:
A sadder and a wiser man
He rose the morrow morn.

Kubla Khan

In the summer of the year 1797, Coleridge, then in ill health, relates that he had retired to a lonely farmhouse between Porlock and Linton, on the Exmoor confines of Somerset and Devonshire. In consequence of a slight indisposition, an anodyne had been prescribed, from the effects of which he fell asleep in his chair at the moment that he was reading the following sentence, or words of the same substance, in Purchas's "Pilgrimage": "Here the Khan Kubla commanded a palace to be built, and a stately garden thereunto. And thus ten miles of fertile ground were inclosed with a wall." Coleridge goes on to say that he continued for about three hours in a profound sleep, at least of the external senses, during which time he has the most vivid confidence, that he could not have composed less than from two to three hundred lines; if that indeed can be called composition in which all the images rose up before him as things, with a parallel production of the correspondent expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort. On awaking he appeared to himself to have a distinct recollection of the whole, and taking his pen, ink and paper, instantly and eagerly wrote down the lines that are here preserved. At this moment he was unfortunately called out by a person on business from Porlock, and detained by him above an hour, and on his return to his room, found, to his no small surprise and mortification, that though he still retained some vague and dim recollection of the general purport of the vision, yet, with the exception of some eight or ten scattered lines and images, all the rest had passed away, like the images on the surface of a stream into which a stone has been cast, but, alas without the after restoration of the latter.

*"Then all the charm
Is broken—all that phantom-world so fair
Vanishes, and a thousand circlets spread,
And each mis-shapes the other. Stay awhile,*

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

*Poor youth! who scarcely dar'st lift up thine eyes—
The stream will soon renew its smoothness, soon
The visions will return! And lo, he stays
And soon the fragments dim of lovely forms
Come trembling back, unite, and now once more
The pool becomes a mirror."*

IN Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree:
Where Alph, the sacred river, ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.
So twice five miles of fertile ground
With walls and towers were girdled round:
And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills
Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
And here were forests ancient as the hills,
Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

But O, that deep romantic chasm which slanted
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!
A savage place, as holy and enchanted
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon-lover!
And from this chasm, with ceaseless turmoil seething,
As if this earth in fast thick pants were breathing,
A mighty fountain momentarily was forced;
Amid whose swift half-intermitted burst
Huge fragments vaulted like rebounding hail,
Or chaffy grain beneath the thresher's flail;
And 'mid these dancing rocks at once and ever
It flung up momentarily the sacred river.
Five miles meandering with a mazy motion
Through wood and dale the sacred river ran,
Then reached the caverns measureless to man,
And sank in tumult to a lifeless ocean:

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And 'mid this tumult Kubla heard from far
Ancestral voices prophesying war!

The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

A damsel with a dulcimer
In a vision once I saw:
It was an Abyssinian maid,
And on her dulcimer she played,
Singing of Mount Abora.
Could I revive within me,
Her symphony and song,
To such a deep delight 'twould win me,
That with music loud and long,
I would build that dome in air,
That sunny dome! those caves of ice!
And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread,
For he on honey-dew hath fed,
And drunk the milk of Paradise.

Genevieve

ALL thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When midway on the mount I lay,
Beside the ruined tower.

The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

She leaned against the armèd man,
The statue of the armèd Knight;
She stood and listened to my lay,
Amid the lingering light.

Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

I played a soft and doleful air;
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song, that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

I told her of the Knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand;
And that for ten long years he wooed
The Lady of the Land.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

I told her how he pined: and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love,
Interpreted my own.

She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes, and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!

But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely Knight,
And that he crossed the mountain-woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

That sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes starting up at once
In green and sunny glade—

There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a Fiend,
This miserable Knight!

And that, unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The Lady of the Land;

And how she wept and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever strove to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain;

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And that she nursed him in a cave;
And how his madness went away,
When on the yellow forest leaves
A dying man he lay;

His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve;
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

And hopes, and fears that kindle hope,
An undistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

She wept with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin shame;
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

Her bosom heaved—she stepped aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye
She fled to me and wept.

She half enclosed me with her arms,
She pressed me with a meek embrace;
And bending back her head, looked up,
And gazed upon my face.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

'Twas partly love, and partly fear,
And partly 'twas a bashful art,
That I might rather feel, than see,
The swelling of her heart.

I calmed her fears, and she was calm,
And told her love with virgin pride;
And so I won my Genevieve,
My bright and beauteous Bride.

*Hymn Before Sunrise, in the Vale of
Chamouni*

HAST thou a charm to stay the morning-star
In his steep course? So long he seems to pause
On thy bald, awful head, O sovereign Blanc!
The Arve and Arveiron at thy base
Rave ceaselessly; but thou, most awful Form,
Risest from forth thy silent sea of pines
How silently! Around thee and above,
Deep is the air and dark, substantial, black—
An ebon mass. Methinks thou piercest it,
As with a wedge! But when I look again,
It is thine own calm home, thy crystal shrine,
Thy habitation from eternity!
O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Didst vanish from my thought. Entranced in prayer
I worshipped the Invisible alone.

Yet, like some sweet beguiling melody,
So sweet we know not we are listening to it,
Thou, the mean while, wast blending with my thought—

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Yea, with my life and life's own secret joy—
Till the dilating soul, enrapt, transfused,
Into the mighty vision passing, there,
As in her natural form, swelled vast to Heaven!

Awake, my soul! not only passive praise
Thou owest! not alone these swelling tears,
Mute thanks, and secret ecstasy! Awake,
Voice of sweet song! Awake, my heart, awake!
Green vales and icy cliffs, all join my hymn.

Thou first and chief, sole sovereign of the vale!
O, struggling with the darkness all the night,
And visited all night by troops of stars,
Or when they climb the sky or when they sink,
Companion of the morning-star at dawn,
Thyself Earth's rosy star, and of the dawn
Co-herald—wake, O, wake, and utter praise!
Who sank thy sunless pillars deep in earth?
Who filled thy countenance with rosy light?
Who made thee parent of perpetual streams?

And you, ye five wild torrents fiercely glad!
Who called you forth from night and utter death
From dark and icy caverns called you forth,
Down those precipitous, black, jagged rocks,
Forever shattered and the same forever?
Who gave you your invulnerable life,
Your strength, your speed, your fury, and your joy
Unceasing thunder and eternal foam?
And who commanded (and the silence came)
Here let the billows stiffen, and have rest?

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Ye ice-falls! ye that from the mountain's brow
Adown enormous ravines slope amain—
Torrents, methinks, that heard a mighty voice,
And stopped at once amid their maddest plunge
Motionless torrents! silent cataracts!
Who made you glorious as the gates of Heaven
Beneath the keen full moon? Who bade the sun
Clothe you with rainbows? Who, with living flowers
Of loveliest blue, spread garlands at your feet?
God!—let the torrents, like a shout of nations,
Answer! and let the ice-plains echo, God!
God! sing, ye meadow-streams, with gladsome voice!
Ye pine-groves, with your soft and soul-like sounds!
And they too have a voice, yon piles of snow,
And in their perilous fall shall thunder, God!

Ye living flowers that skirt the eternal frost!
Ye wild goats sporting round the eagle's nest!
Ye eagles, playmates of the mountain-storm!
Ye lightnings, the dread arrows of the clouds!
Ye signs and wonders of the elements!
Utter forth God, and fill the hills with praise!

Thou, too, hoar Mount! with thy sky-pointing peaks,
Oft from whose feet the avalanche, unheard,
Shoots downward, glittering through the pure serene,
Into the depth of clouds that veil thy breast;
Thou too again, stupendous Mountain! thou
That, as I raise my head, awhile bowed low
In adoration, upward from thy base
Slow traveling with dim eyes suffused with tears,
Solemnly seemest, like a vapory cloud,
To rise before me—Rise, O, ever rise!
Rise like a cloud of incense, from the Earth!
Thou kingly Spirit throned among the hills,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Thou dread ambassador from Earth to Heaven,
Great Hierarch! tell thou the silent sky,
And tell the stars, and tell yon rising sun,
Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God.

Christabel

In his preface to the first edition of "Christabel," Coleridge says: "The first part of the following poem was written in 1797, at Stowey, in the county of Somerset. The second part, after my return from Germany, in 1800, at Keswick, Cumberland. Since the latter date, my poetic powers have been, till very lately, in a state of suspended animation. But as, in my very first conception of the tale, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness no less than with the liveliness of a vision; I trust that I shall be able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come, in the course of the present year. . . ."

"I have only to add, that the metre of the Christabel is not, properly speaking, irregular, though it may seem so from its being founded on a new principle: namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four. Nevertheless this occasional variation in number of syllables is not introduced wantonly, or for the mere ends of convenience, but in correspondence with some transition in the nature of the imagery or passion."

PART I

'TIS the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock:
Tu-whit!—Tu-whoo!
And hark, again! the crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Sir Leoline, the baron rich,
Hath a toothless mastiff, which
From her kennel beneath the rock
Maketh answer to the clock,
Four for the quarters, and twelve for the hour;
Ever and aye, by shine and shower,
Sixteen short howls, not over-loud;
Some say, she sees my lady's shroud.

Is the night chilly and dark?
The night is chilly, but not dark.
The thin gray cloud is spread on high,
It covers, but not hides the sky.
The moon is behind, and at the full;
And yet she looks both small and dull.
The night is chill, the cloud is gray:
'Tis a month before the month of May,
And the spring comes slowly up this way.

The lovely lady, Christabel,
Whom her father loves so well,
What makes her in the woods so late,
A furlong from the castle gate?
She had dreams all yesternight
Of her own betrothèd knight;
And she in the midnight wood will pray
For the weal of her lover that's far away.

She stole along, she nothing spoke,
The sighs she heaved were soft and low,
And naught was green upon the oak,
But moss and rarest mistletoe:
She kneels beneath the huge oak tree,
And in silence prayeth she.
The lady sprang up suddenly,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

The lovely lady, Christabel!
It moaned as near as near could be,
But what it is she cannot tell.
On the other side, it seems to be,
Of the huge, broad-breasted, old oak tree.

The night is chill; the forest bare;
Is it the wind that moaneth bleak?
There is not wind enough in the air
To move away the ringlet curl
From the lovely lady's cheek—
There is not wind enough to twirl
The one red leaf, the last of its clan,
That dances as often as dance it can,
Hanging so light, and hanging so high,
On the topmost twig that looks up at the sky.

Hush, beating heart of Christabel!
Jesu, Maria, shield her well!
She folded her arms beneath her cloak,
And stole to the other side of the oak.
What sees she there?

There she sees a damsel bright,
Dressed in a silken robe of white,
That shadowy in the moonlight shone:
The neck that made that white robe wan,
Her stately neck, and arms were bare;
Her blue-veined feet unsandalled were,
And wildly glittered here and there
The gems entangled in her hair.
I guess, 'twas frightful there to see
A lady so richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"Mary mother, save me now!"
(Said Christabel) "And who art thou?"
The lady strange made answer meet,
And her voice was faint and sweet—
"Have pity on my sore distress,
I scarce can speak for weariness:
Stretch forth thy hand, and have no fear!"
Said Christabel, "How camest thou here?"
And the lady, whose voice was faint and sweet,
Did thus pursue her answer meet:

"My sire is of a noble line,
And my name is Geraldine;
Five warriors seized me yesternorn,
Me, even me, a maid forlorn:
They choked my cries with force and fright,
And tied me on a palfrey white.
The palfrey was as fleet as wind,
And they rode furiously behind.
They spurred amain, their steeds were white;
And once we crossed the shade of night.

As sure as Heaven shall rescue me,
I have no thought what men they be;
Nor do I know how long it is
(For I have lain entranced, I wis)
Since one, the tallest of the five,
Took me from the palfrey's back,
A weary woman, scarce alive.
Some muttered words his comrades spoke:
He placed me underneath this oak,
He swore they would return with haste:
Whither they went I cannot tell—
I thought I heard, some minutes past,
Sounds as of a castle-bell.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Stretch forth thy hand (thus ended she),
And help a wretched maid to flee."

Then Christabel stretched forth her hand,
And comforted fair Geraldine:
"O well, bright dame! may you command
The service of Sir Leoline;
And gladly our stout chivalry
Will he send forth, and friends withal,
To guide and guard you safe and free
Home to your noble father's hall."

She rose; and forth with steps they passed
That strove to be, and were not, fast.
Her gracious *stars* the lady blessed,
And thus spake on sweet Christabel:
"All our household are at rest,
The hall as silent as the cell;
Sir Leoline is weak in health,
And may not well awakened be,
But we will move as if in stealth;
And I beseech your courtesy,
This night, to share your couch with me."

They crossed the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little door she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
The gate that was ironed within and without,
Where an army in battle array had marched out.
The lady sank, belike through pain,
And Christabel with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary weight,
Over the threshold of the gate:

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Then the lady rose again,
And moved as she were not in pain.

So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were
And Christabel devoutly cried
To the lady by her side,
"Praise we the Virgin all divine
Who hath rescued thee from thy distress!"
"Alas! alas!" said Geraldine,
"I cannot speak for weariness."
So, free from danger, free from fear,
They crossed the court: right glad they were.

Outside her kennel, the mastiff old
Lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold.
The mastiff old did not awake,
Yet she an angry moan did make!
And what can ail the mastiff bitch?
Never till now she uttered yell
Beneath the eye of Christabel.
Perhaps it is the owlet's scritch;
For what can ail the mastiff bitch?

They passed the hall, that echoes still,
Pass as lightly as you will!
The brands were flat, the brands were dying,
Amid their own white ashes lying:
But when the lady passed, there came
A tongue of light, a fit of flame;
And Christabel saw the lady's eye,
And nothing else saw she thereby,
Save the boss of the shield of Sir Leoline tall,
Which hung in a murky old niche in the wall.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"O softly tread!" said Christabel,
"My father seldom sleepeth well."

Sweet Christabel her feet doth bare;
And, jealous of the listening air,
They steal their way from stair to stair:
Now in glimmer, and now in gloom—
And now they pass the baron's room,
As still as death, with stifled breath!
And now have reached her chamber door;
And now doth Geraldine press down
The rushes of the chamber floor.

The moon shines dim in the open air
And not a moonbeam enters here.
But they without its light can see
The chamber carved so curiously,
Carved with figures strange and sweet,
All made out of the carver's brain,
For a lady's chamber meet:
The lamp with twofold silver chain
Is fastened to an angel's feet.

The silver lamp burns dead and dim:
But Christabel the lamp will trim.
She trimmed the lamp, and made it bright,
And left it swinging to and fro,
While Geraldine, in wretched plight
Sank down upon the floor below.
"O weary lady, Geraldine,
I pray you, drink this cordial wine;
It is a wine of virtuous powers;
My mother made it of wild flowers."

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"And will your mother pity me,
Who am a maiden most forlorn?"
Christabel answered—"Wo is me,
She died the hour that I was born.
I have heard the gray-haired friar tell,
How on her death-bed she did say,
That she should hear the castle-bell
Strike twelve upon my wedding-day.
O mother dear! that thou wert here!"
"I would," said Geraldine, "she were!"

But soon, with altered voice said she—
"Off, wandering mother! Peak and pine!
I have power to bid thee flee."
Alas! what ails poor Geraldine?
Why stares she with unsettled eye?
Can she the bodiless dead espy?
And why with hollow voice cries she,
"Off, woman, off! this hour is mine—
Though thou her guardian spirit be,
Off, woman, off! 'tis given to me."

Then Christabel knelt by the lady's side,
And raised to heaven her eyes so blue—
Alas! said she, this ghastly ride—
Dear lady; it hath wildered you!
The lady wiped her moist cold brow,
And faintly said, "'Tis over now!"

Again the wild-flower wine she drank;
Her fair large eyes 'gan glitter bright,
And from the floor whereon she sank,
The lofty lady stood upright;
She was most beautiful to see,
Like a lady of a far countree.

And thus the lofty lady spake—
 "All they, who live in the upper sky,
 Do love you, holy Christabel!
 And you love them, and for their sake
 And for the good which me befell,
 Even I in my degrees will try,
 Fair maiden! to requite you well.
 But now unrobe yourself; for I
 Must pray, ere yet in bed I lie."

Quoth Christabel, "So let it be!"
 And as the lady bade, did she;
 Her gentle limbs did she undress,
 And lay down in her loveliness.

But through her brain of weal and wo
 So many thoughts moved to and fro,
 That vain it were her lids to close;
 So halfway from the bed she rose,
 And on her elbow did recline
 To look at the Lady Geraldine.

Beneath the lamp the lady bowed,
 And slowly rolled her eyes around;
 Then drawing in her breath aloud,
 Like one that shuddered, she unbound
 The cincture from beneath her breast.
 Her silken robe, and inner vest,
 Dropped to her feet, and full in view,
 Behold! her bosom and half her side—
 A sight to dream of, not to tell!
 O shield her; shield sweet Christabel!

Yet Geraldine nor speaks nor stirs;
 Ah! what a stricken look was hers!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Deep from within she seems halfway
To lift some weight with sick assay,
And eyes the maid and seeks delay;
Then suddenly, as one defied,
Collects herself in scorn and pride,
And lay down by the maiden's side!
And in her arms the maid she took,

Ah well-a-day!

And with low voice and doleful look

These words did say:

"In the touch of this bosom there worketh a spell
Which is lord of thy utterance, Christabel!
Thou knowest to-night, and wilt know to-morrow
This mark of my shame, this seal of my sorrow;

But vainly thou warrest,

For this is alone in

Thy power to declare,

That in the dim forest

Thou heard'st a low moaning,

And found'st a bright lady, surpassingly fair:

And didst bring her home with thee in love and in
charity,

To shield her and shelter her from the damp air."

THE CONCLUSION TO PART I.

It was a lovely sight to see
The lady Christabel, when she
Was praying at the old oak tree.

Amid the jagged shadows

Of mossy leafless boughs,

Kneeling in the moonlight,

To make her gentle vows;

Her slender palms together pressed,

Heaving sometimes on her breast;

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Her face resigned to bliss or bale—
Her face—O call it fair, not pale!
And both blue eyes more bright than clear,
Each about to have a tear.

With open eyes (ah, wo is me!)
Asleep, and dreaming fearfully,
Fearfully dreaming, yet I wis,
Dreaming that alone, which is—
O sorrow and shame! Can this be she,
The lady, who knelt at the old oak tree?
And lo! the worker of these harms,
That holds the maiden in her arms,
Seems to slumber still and mild,
As a mother with her child.

A star hath set, a star hath risen,
O Geraldine! since arms of thine
Have been the lovely lady's prison.
O Geraldine! one hour was thine—
Thou'st had thy will! By tairn and rill,
The night-birds all that hour were still.
But now they are jubilant anew
From cliff and tower, tu-whoo! tu-whoo!
To-whoo! tu-whoo! from wood and fell!

And see, the Lady Christabel
Gathers herself from out her trance;
Her limbs relax, her countenance
Grows sad and soft; the smooth thin lids
Close o'er her eyes; and tears she sheds—
Large tears that leave the lashes bright
And oft the while she seems to smile
As infants at a sudden light!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Yea, she doth smile, and she doth weep,
Like a youthful hermitess
Beauteous in a wilderness,
Who, praying always, prays in sleep,
And, if she move unquietly,
Perchance, 'tis but the blood so free,
Comes back and tingles in her feet.
No doubt, she hath a vision sweet:
What if her guardian spirit 'twere?
What if she knew her mother near?
But this she knows, in joys and woes
That saints will aid if men will call:
For the blue sky bends over all!

PART II

"Each matin-bell," the baron saith,
"Knells us back to a world of death."
These words Sir Leoline first said.
When he rose and found his lady dead,
These words Sir Leoline will say,
Many a morn to his dying day!

And hence the custom and law began,
That still at dawn the sacristan,
Who duly pulls the heavy bell,
Five-and-forty beads must tell
Between each stroke—a warning knell,
Which not a soul can choose but hear
From Bratha Head to Wyndermere.

Saith Bracy the bard, "So let it knell!
And let the drowsy sacristan
Still count as slowly as he can!"
There is no lack of such, I ween,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

As well fill up the space between.
In Langdale Pike and Witch's Lair
And dungeon-ghyll so foully rent,
With ropes of rock and bells of air
Three sinful sextons' ghosts are pent,
Who all give back, one after t'other,
The death-note to their living brother;
And oft, too, by the knell offended,
Just as their one! two! three! is ended,
The devil mocks the doleful tale
With a merry peal from Borodale.

The air is still! through mist and cloud
That merry peal comes ringing loud;
And Geraldine shakes off her dread,
And rises lightly from the bed;
Puts on her silken vestments white,
And tricks her hair in lovely plight,
And, nothing doubting of her spell.
Awakens the lady Christabel,
"Sleep you, sweet Lady Christabel?
I trust that you have rested well."

And Christabel awoke, and spied
The same who lay down by her side—
O rather say, the same whom she
Raised up beneath the old oak-tree!
Nay, fairer yet! and yet more fair!
For she belike hath drunken deep
Of all the blessedness of sleep!
And while she spake, her looks, her air
Such gentle thankfulness declare,
That (so it seemed) her girded vests
Grew tight beneath her heaving breasts.
"Sure I have sinned," said Christabel,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

"Now Heaven be praised, if all be well";
And in low faltering tones, yet sweet,
Did she the lofty lady greet,
With such perplexity of mind
As dreams too lively leave behind.

So quickly she rose, and quickly arrayed
Her maiden limbs, and having prayed
That He, who on the cross did groan,
Might wash away her sins unknown,
She forthwith led fair Geraldine
To meet her sire, Sir Leoline.

The lovely maid and the lady tall
Are pacing both into the hall,
And, pacing on through page and groom,
Enter the Baron's presence-room.
The Baron rose, and while he pressed
His gentle daughter to his breast,
With cheerful wonder in his eyes
The Lady Geraldine espies,
And gave such welcome to the same,
As might beseem so bright a dame!

But when he heard the lady's tale,
And when she told her father's name,
Why waxed Sir Leoline so pale,
Murmuring o'er the name again,
Lord Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine?

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above,
And life is thorny, and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,

Doth work like madness in the brain.
 And thus it chanced, as I divine,
 With Roland and Sir Leoline.
 Each spake words of high disdain
 And insult to his heart's best brother:
 They parted—ne'er to meet again!
 But never either found another
 To free the hollow heart from paining—
 They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
 Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
 A dreary sea now flows between:
 But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
 Shall wholly do away, I ween,
 The marks of that which once hath been.
 Sir Leoline, a moment's space,
 Stood gazing on the damsel's face:
 And the youthful Lord of Tryermaine
 Came back upon his heart again.

O then the Baron forgot his age!
 His noble heart swelled high with rage;
 He swore by the wounds in Jesu's side,
 He would proclaim it far and wide
 With trump and solemn heraldry,
 That they, who thus had wronged the dame,
 Were base as spotted infamy!
 "And if they dare deny the same,
 My herald shall appoint a week,
 And let the recreant traitors seek
 My tourney court—that there and then
 I may dislodge their reptile souls
 From the bodies and forms of men!"
 He spake: his eye in lightning rolls!
 For the lady was ruthlessly seized; and he kenned
 In the beautiful lady the child of his friend!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And now the tears were on his face,
And fondly in his arms he took
Fair Geraldine, who met the embrace,
Prolonging it with joyous look,
Which when she viewed, a vision fell
Upon the soul of Christabel,
The vision of fear, the touch and pain
She shrunk and shuddered, and saw again—
(Ah, woe is me! Was it for thee,
Thou gentle maid! such sights to see!)

Again she saw that bosom old,
Again she felt that bosom cold
And drew in her breath with a hissing sound;
Whereat the knight turned wildly round,
And nothing saw but his own sweet maid
With eyes upraised, as one that prayed.

The touch, the sight, had passed away,
And in its stead that vision blest,
Which comforted her after-rest,
While in the lady's arms she lay.
Had put a rapture in her breast,
And on her lips and o'er her eyes
Spread smiles like light!

With new surprise,
"What ails then my beloved child?"
The Baron said.—His daughter mild
Made answer, "All will yet be well!"
I ween, she had no power to tell
Aught else; so mighty was the spell.

Yet he who saw this Geraldine
Had deemed her sure a thing divine,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

Such sorrow with such grace she blended,
As if she feared she had offended
Sweet Christabel, that gentle maid!
And with such lowly tones she prayed,
She might be sent without delay
Home to her father's mansion.

“Nay!

Nay, by my soul!” said Leoline.
“Ho! Bracy the bard, the charge be thine!
Go thou, with music sweet and loud,
And take two steeds with trappings proud,
And take the youth whom thou lovest best
To bear thy harp and learn thy song,
And clothe you both in solemn vest,
And over the mountains haste along,
Lest wandering folk, that are abroad,
Detain you on the valley road.
And when he has crossed the Irthing flood,
My merry bard he hastes, he hastes
Up Knorren Moor, through Halegarth wood,
And reaches soon that castle good
Which stands and threatens Scotland's wastes.

“Bard Bracy, bard Bracy! your horses are fleet,
Ye must ride up the hall, your music so sweet,
More loud than your horses' echoing feet!
And loud and loud to Lord Roland call,
Thy daughter is safe in Langdale hall!
Thy beautiful daughter is safe and free—
Sir Leoline greets thee thus through me.
He bids thee come without delay
With all thy numerous array;
And take thy lovely daughter home:

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And he will meet thee on the way
With all his numerous array,
White with their panting palfreys' foam:
And by mine honor! I will say
That I repent me of the day
When I spake words of high disdain
To Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine!
For since that evil hour hath flown,
Many a summer's sun hath shone;
Yet ne'er found I a friend again
Like Roland de Vaux of Tryermaine."

The lady fell and clasped his knees,
Her face upraised, her eyes o'erflowing;
And Bracy replied, with faltering voice,
His gracious hail on all bestowing:
"Thy words, thou sire of Christabel,
Are sweeter than my heart can tell;
Yet might I gain a boon of thee,
This day my journey should not be,
So strange a dream hath come to me,
That I had vowed with music loud
To clear yon wood from thing unblest,
Warned by a vision in my rest!
For in my sleep I saw that dove,
That gentle bird, whom thou dost love,
And call'st by thy own daughter's name—
Sir Leoline! I saw the same,
Fluttering, and uttering fearful moan,
Among the green herbs in the forest alone,
Which when I saw and when I heard,
I wondered what might ail the bird
For nothing near it could I see,
Save the grass and green herbs underneath the old tree.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

“And in my dreams methought I went
To search out what might there be found;
And what the sweet bird’s trouble meant,
That thus lay fluttering on the ground.
I went and peered, and could descry
No cause for her distressful cry;
But yet, for her dear lady’s sake,
I stooped, methought, the dove to take.
When lo! I saw a bright green snake
Coiled around its wings and neck.
Green as the herbs on which it couched,
Close by the dove’s its head it crouched!
And with the dove it heaves and stirs,
Swelling its neck as she swelled hers!
I woke; it was the midnight hour,
The clock was echoing in the tower;
But though my slumber was gone by,
This dream it would not pass away—
It seems to live upon my eye
And thence I vowed this selfsame day,
With music strong and saintly song,
To wander through the forest bare,
Lest aught unholy loiter there.”

Thus Bracy said: the Baron, the while,
Half-listening, heard him with a smile;
Then turned to Lady Geraldine,
His eyes made up of wonder and love;
And said, in courtly accents fine,
“Sweet maid, Lord Roland’s beauteous dove,
With arms more strong than harp or song,
Thy sire and I will crush the snake!”
He kissed her forehead as he spake,
And Geraldine, in maiden wise,
Casting down her large bright eyes,

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

With blushing cheek and courtesy fine
She turned her from Sir Leoline;
Softly gathering up her train,
That o'er her right arm fell again,
And folded her arms across her chest,
And couched her head upon her breast,
And looked askance at Christabel—
Jesu Maria, shield her well!

A snake's small eye blinks dull and shy,
And the lady's eyes they shrunk in her head;
Each shrunk up to a serpent's eye,
And with somewhat of malice and more of dread
At Christabel she looked askance:
One moment and the sight was fled!
But Christabel, in dizzy trance
Stumbling on the unsteady ground,
Shuddered aloud with a hissing sound;
And Geraldine again turned round,
And like a thing that sought relief,
Full of wonder and full of grief,
She rolled her large bright eyes divine
Wildly on Sir Leoline.

The maid, alas! her thoughts are gone,
She nothing sees—no sight but one!
The maid, devoid of guile and sin,
I know not how, in fearful wise
So deeply had she drunken in
That look, those shrunken serpent eyes,
That all her features were resigned
To this sole image in her mind:
And passively did imitate
That look of dull and treacherous hate!

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

And thus she stood, in dizzy trance,
Still picturing that look askance,
With forced, unconscious sympathy,
Full before her father's view—
As far as such a look could be
In eyes so innocent and blue—
And when the trance was o'er, the maid
Paused a while, and inly prayed:
Then, falling at the Baron's feet,
"By my mother's soul do I entreat
That thou this woman send away!"
She said: and more she could not say;
For what she knew she could not tell,
O'ermastered by the mighty spell.

Why is thy cheek so wan and wild,
Sir Leoline? Thy only child
Lies at thy feet, thy joy, thy pride,
So fair, so innocent, so mild;
The same, for whom thy lady died.
O by the pangs of her dear mother,
Think thou no evil of thy child!
For her, and thee, and for no other,
She prayed the moment ere she died;
Prayed that the babe for whom she died
Might prove her dear lord's joy and pride!
That prayer her deadly pangs beguiled,
Sir Leoline!
And wouldst thou wrong thy only child
Her child and thine?

Within the Baron's heart and brain
If thoughts like these had any share,
They only swelled his rage and pain,
And did but work confusion there.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

His heart was cleft with pain and rage,
His cheeks they quivered, his eyes were wild—
Dishonored thus in his old age;
Dishonored by his only child,
And all his hospitality
To the insulted daughter of his friend
By more than woman's jealousy
Brought thus to a disgraceful end!
He rolled his eye with stern regard
Upon the gentle minstrel bard,
And said in tones abrupt, austere,
"Why, Bracy! dost thou loiter here?
I bade thee hence!" The bard obeyed;
And, turning from his own sweet maid,
The aged knight, Sir Leoline,
Led forth the Lady Geraldine!

THE CONCLUSION OF PART II

A little child, a limber elf,
Singing, dancing to itself,
A fairy thing with red round cheeks
That always finds and never seeks,
Makes such a vision to the sight
As fills a father's eyes with light;
And pleasures flow in so thick and fast
Upon his heart that he at last
Must needs express his love's excess
With words of unmeant bitterness.
Perhaps 'tis pretty to force together
Thoughts so all unlike each other;
To mutter and mock a broken charm,
To dally with wrong that does no harm.
Perhaps 'tis tender too and pretty
At each wild word to feel within

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE

A sweet recoil of love and pity.
And what, if in a world of sin
(O sorrow and shame should this be true)
Such giddiness of heart and brain
Comes seldom save from rage and pain,
So talks as it's most used to do.

The Knight's Tomb

Strangely enough we find here in the masterly Coleridge that old impertinent rhetorical fault, the mixed metaphor. In the third line below, it is hard to visualize a grave excavated upon a breast, even though it be "the breast of Helvellyn." I should have placed the grave on the slope of Helvellyn.

WHERE is the grave of Sir Arthur O'Kellyn?
Where may the grave of that good man be?
By the side of a spring, on the breast of Helvellyn,
Under the twigs of a young birch tree!
The oak that in summer was sweet to hear,
And rustled its leaves in the fall of the year,
And whistled and roared in the winter alone,
Is gone—and the birch in its stead is grown.
The Knight's bones are dust,
And his good sword rust—
His soul is with the saints, I trust.

Epitaph on Himself

STOP, Christian passerby! Stop, child of God!
And read with gentle breast. Beneath this sod
A poet lies, or that which once seemed he—
Oh! lift one thought in prayer for S. T. C.!
That he, who many a year, with toil of breath,
Found death in life, may here find life in death!
Mercy for praise—to be forgiven for fame,
He asked and hoped through Christ—do thou the same.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

ENGLAND, 1774-1843

IT is a curious fact that Southey is virtually unread today; yet in his lifetime he was held in even greater esteem than were his contemporaries, Coleridge and Wordsworth. It may be that his personality, rather than his poems, attracted the admiration of his fellows. His verse fills fourteen volumes, embracing subjects of almost every description. On his longer poems, *Thalaba* and *The Curse of Kehama*, he based his hopes of lasting fame, but they are now read least of all. The reason is mainly their length and their remoteness from living interests. Their splendid diction is frequently eloquence rather than true poetry. Some of his shorter poems, such as *The Battle of Blenheim*, still hold their place. Southey became Poet Laureate of England in 1813, and had a pension from the Government. He declined a baronetcy.

His Books

MY days among the Dead are passed;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old:
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal
And seek relief in woe;
And while I understand and feel

ROBERT SOUTHEY

How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedewed
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead; with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears;
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead; anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

The Battle of Blenheim

IT was a summer evening,
Old Kaspar's work was done,
And he before his cottage door
Was sitting in the sun,
And by him sported on the green
His little grandchild Wilhelmine.

She saw her brother Peterkin
Roll something large and round,
Which he beside the rivulet
In playing there had found;
He came to ask what he had found,
That was so large, and smooth, and round.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Old Kaspar took it from the boy,
Who stood expectant by;
And then the old man shook his head,
And with a natural sigh,
'Tis some poor fellow's skull,' said he,
'Who fell in the great victory.

'I find them in the garden,
For there's many here about;
And often when I go to plough,
The ploughshare turns them out!
For many thousand men,' said he,
'Were slain in that great victory.'

'Now tell us what 'twas all about,'
Young Peterkin, he cries;
And little Wilhelmine looks up
With wonder-waiting eyes;
'Now tell us all about the war,
And what they fought each other for.'

'It was the English,' Kaspar cried,
'Who put the French to rout;
But what they fought each other for
I could not well make out;
But everybody said,' quoth he,
'That 'twas a famous victory.

'My father lived at Blenheim then,
Yon little stream hard by;
They burnt his dwelling to the ground,
And he was forced to fly;
So with his wife and child he fled,
Nor had he where to rest his head.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

'With fire and sword the country round
Was wasted far and wide,
And many a childing mother then,
And new-born baby died;
But things like that, you know, must be
At every famous victory.

'They say it was a shocking sight
After the field was won;
For many thousand bodies here
Lay rotting in the sun;
But things like that, you know, must be
After a famous victory.

'Great praise the Duke of Marlbro' won,
And our good Prince Eugene.'
'Why, 'twas a very wicked thing!'
Said little Wilhelmine.
'Nay . . . nay . . . my little girl,' quoth he,
'It was a famous victory.

'And everybody praised the Duke
Who this great fight did win.'
'But what good came of it at last?'
Quoth little Peterkin.
'Why, that I cannot tell,' said he,
'But 'twas a famous victory.'

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Malice

FROM "THE CURSE OF KEHAMA"

I CHARM thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beasts of blood;
From sickness I charm thee,
And time shall not harm thee,
But earth, which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee;
And water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee;
And the winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee;
And the dews shall not wet thee
When they fall nigh thee:
And thou shalt seek death
To release thee in vain;
Thou shalt live in thy pain,
While Kehama shall reign
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain;
And sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the curse shall be on thee,
For ever and ever.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Wat Tyler

The refrain of this song was the motto of Wat Tyler's rebels, who marched upon London in 1381.

WHEN Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

Wretched is the infant's lot,
Born within the straw-roofed cot;
Be he generous, wise or brave,
He must only be a slave.
Long, long labor, little rest,
Still to toil, to be oppressed;
Drained by taxes of his store,
Punished next for being poor:
This is the poor wretch's lot,
Born within the straw-roofed cot.

While the peasant works—to sleep,
What the peasant sows—to reap,
On the couch of ease to lie,
Rioting in revelry;
Be he villain, be he fool,
Still to hold despotic rule,
Trampling on his slaves with scorn!
This is to be nobly born.

"When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?"

CHARLES LAMB

ENGLAND, 1775-1834

LAMB produced no poems equal to his immortal prose writings, but I cannot refrain from including in this collection his *Old Familiar Faces*. He was a wayward and eccentric humorist—mingling the sweetness of the child with the knowledge of the scholar. The name *Elia* under which his essays were written was that of a fellow-clerk in the India House, where Lamb was employed from 1792 to 1825.

The Old Familiar Faces

Although the fame of Lamb as a poet rests mainly upon these lines, "The Old Familiar Faces" is scarcely a poem at all. The metre halts, stumbles, and there is little or no magic in it. But, as Arthur Symonds observes, "it is speech, naked human speech, such as rarely gets through the lovely disguise of verse. It has the raw humanity of Walt Whitman, and almost hurts us by a kind of dumb helplessness in it." There are few such poems in literature, and no other in the work of Lamb.

I HAVE had playmates, I have had companions,
In my days of childhood, in my joyful school-days—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have been laughing, I have been carousing,
Drinking late, sitting late, with my bosom cronies—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

CHARLES LAMB

I loved a Love once, fairest among women:
Closed are her doors on me, I must not see her—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

I have a friend, a kinder friend has no man:
Like an ingrate, I left my friend abruptly;
Left him, to muse on the old familiar faces.

Ghost-like I paced round the haunts of my childhood,
Earth seemed a desert I was bound to traverse,
Seeking to find the old familiar faces.

Friend of my bosom, thou more than a brother,
Why wert not thou born in my father's dwelling?
So might we talk of the old familiar faces—

How some they have died, and some they have left me,
And some are taken from me; all are departed—
All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

On an Infant Dying as Soon as Born

I SAW where in the shroud did lurk
A curious frame of Nature's work;
A floweret crushed in the bud,
A nameless piece of Babyhood,
Was in her cradle-coffin lying;
Extinct, with scarce the sense of dying:
So soon to exchange the imprisoning womb
For darker closets of the tomb!
She did but ope an eye, and put
A clear beam forth, then straight up shut

CHARLES LAMB

For the long dark: ne'er more to see
Through glasses of mortality.

Riddle of destiny, who can show
What thy short visit meant, or know
What thy errand here below?
Shall we say that Nature blind
Checked her hand, and changed her mind,
Just when she had exactly wrought
A finished pattern without fault?
Could she flag, or could she tire,
Or lacked she the Promethean fire
(With her nine moons' long workings sickened)
That should thy little limbs have quickened?
Limbs so firm, they seemed to assure
Life of health, and days mature:
Woman's self in miniature!
Limbs so fair, they might supply
(Themselves now but cold imagery)
The sculptor to make Beauty by.
Or did the stern-eyed Fate descry
That babe or mother, one must die;
So in mercy left the stock
And cut the branch; to save the shock
Of young years widowed, and the pain
When single state comes back again
To the lone man who, reft of wife,
Thenceforward drags a maimèd life?
The economy of Heaven is dark,
And wisest clerks have missed the mark,
Why human buds, like this, should fall,
More brief than fly ephemeral
That has his day; while shrivelled crones
Stiffen with age to stocks and stones;

CHARLES LAMB

And crabbèd use the conscience sears
In sinners of an hundred years.

Mother's prattle, mother's kiss,
Baby fond, thou ne'er wilt miss:
Rites, which custom does impose,
Silver bells, and baby clothes;
Coral redder than those lips
Which pale death did late eclipse;
Music framed for infants' glee,
Whistle never tuned for thee;
Though thou want'st not, thou shalt have them,
Loving hearts were they which gave them.
Let not one be missing; nurse,
See them laid upon the hearse
Of infant slain by doom perverse.
Why should kings and nobles have
Pictured trophies to their grave,
And we, churls, to thee deny
Thy pretty toys with thee to lie—
A more harmless vanity?

BLANCO WHITE

ENGLAND, 1775-1841

Night

MYSTERIOUS Night! when our first parent knew
Thee from report divine, and heard thy name,
Did he not tremble for this lovely frame,
This glorious canopy of light and blue?
Yet, 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
Hesperus with the host of heaven came,
And lo! creation widened in man's view.

Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
Within thy beams, O Sun? or who could find
Whilst fruit, and leaf, and insect stood revealed,
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind?
Why do we, then, shun *death*, with anxious strife?
If Light conceals so much—wherefore not Life?

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

ENGLAND, 1775-1864

LANDOR is the great solitary of English literature. Few men have ever impressed their peers so profoundly, or the general public so slightly. Of all celebrated authors, he has been one of the least popular. He was a master of prose, who occasionally wrote poetry. Two of his poems, *Rose Aylmer* and the quatrain beginning "I strove with none," merit immortality. One of his great distinctions is to have inspired Swinburne to write the noble poem he inscribed to Landor.

Rose Aylmer

AH, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and sighs
I consecrate to thee.

Around the Child

AROUND the child bend all the three
Sweet Graces—Faith, Hope, Charity.
Around the man bend other faces—
Pride, Envy, Malice, are his Graces.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Verse

PAST ruined Ilion Helen lives,
Alcestis rises from the shades;
Verse calls them forth; 'tis verse that gives
Immortal youth to mortal maids.

Soon shall Oblivion's deepening veil
Hide all the peopled hills you see,
The gay, the proud, while lovers hail
These many summers you and me.

Plays

ALAS how soon the hours are over
Counted us out to play the lover!
And how much narrower is the stage
Allotted us to play the sage!

But when we play the fool, how wide
The theater expands! Beside
How long the audience sits before us!
How many prompters, what a chorus!

Well I Remember How You Smiled

WELL I remember how you smiled
To see me write your name upon
The soft sea-sand—'Oh! what a child!
You think you're writing upon stonel'

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

I have since written what no tide
Shall ever wash away, what men
Unborn shall read o'er ocean wide
And find Ianthe's name again.

Dirce

STAND close around, ye Stygian set,
With Dirce in one boat conveyed!
Or Charon, seeing, may forget
That he is old and she a shade.

To Robert Browning

THERE is delight in singing, though none hear
Beside the singer; and there is delight
In praising, though the praiser sit alone
And see the praised far off him, far above.
Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world's,
Therefore on him no speech! and brief for thee,
Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing: the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

Finis

I STROVE with none, for none was worth my strife.
Nature I loved and, next to Nature, Art:
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Lament

MILD is the parting year, and sweet
The odor of the falling spray;
Life passes on more rudely fleet,
And balmless is its closing day.

I wait its close, I court its gloom,
But mourn that never must there fall
Or on my breast or on my tomb
The tear that would have soothed it all.

On Lucretia Borgia's Hair

BORGIA, thou once wert almost too august
And high for adoration; now thou'rt dust;
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,
Calm hair meandering in pellucid gold.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

A Lyric

YOU smiled, you spoke, and I believed,
By every word and smile deceived.
Another man would hope no more;
Nor hope I what I hoped before:
But let not this last wish be vain;
Deceive, deceive me once again!

The Shells

These lines from "Gebir" have a stately quality that harks back to the majesty of Milton. Arthur Symonds calls attention to Landor's marching lines in Gebir: he calls them "cold, sensitive, splendid, precise, restrained."

BUT I have sinuous shells of pearly hue
Within, and they that luster have imbibed
In the sun's palace-porch, where when unyoked
His chariot wheel stands midway in the wave:
Shake one and it awakens, then apply
Its polished lips to your attentive ear,
And it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there.

Æschylos and Sophocles

SOPHOCLES. Thou goest then, and leavest none
behind
Worthy to rival thee!
Æschylos. Nay, say not so.
Whose is the hand that now is pressing mine?

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

A hand I may not ever press again!
What glorious forms hath it brought boldly forth
From Pluto's realm! The blind old *Cædipos*
Was led on one side by *Antigone*,
Sophocles propped the other.

Sophocles. *Sophocles*
Soothed not *Prometheus* chained upon his rock,
Keeping the vultures and the Gods away;
Sophocles is not greater than the chief
Who conquered *Ilion*, nor could he revenge
His murder, or stamp everlasting brand
Upon the brow of that adulterous wife.

Æschylos. Live, and do more. Thine is the *Lemnian*
isle,
And thou has placed the arrows in the hand
Of *Philoctetes*, hast assuaged his wounds
And given his aid without which Greece had failed.

Sophocles. I did indeed drive off the pest of flies;
We also have our pest of them which buzz
About our honey, darken it, and sting;
We laugh at them, for under hands like ours,
Without the wing that *Philoctetes* shook,
One single feather crushes the whole swarm.
I must be grave. Hath *Sicily* such charms
Above our *Athens*? Many charms hath she,
But she hath kings. Accursed be the race!

Æschylos. But where kings honor better men than
they
Let kings be honored too. The laurel crown
Surmounts the golden; wear it; and farewell.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

SCOTLAND, 1777-1844

CAMPBELL gained fame by producing, at twoney-one, his principal poem, *The Pleasures of Hope*. Despite its didacticism and marks of juvenility, the vigor of thought and description, and power of versification displayed in the poem, made it a marvellous performance for so young a man. His other larger poems are *Gertrude of Wyoming* (1809) and *Theodric* (1824). It is not his longer poems, however, that give Thomas Campbell a secure place in English literature, but his patriotic and war lyrics, notably *Ye Mariners of England* and *Hohenlinden*.

Ye Mariners of England

YE Mariners of England
That guard our native seas!
Whose flag has braved a thousand years
The battle and the breeze!
Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe;
And sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

The spirits of your fathers
Shall start from every wave—
For the deck it was their field of fame,
And Ocean was their grave:

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Where Blake and mighty Nelson fell
Your manly hearts shall glow,
As ye sweep through the deep,
While the stormy winds do blow!
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy winds do blow.

Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep;
Her march is o'er the mountain-waves,
Her home is on the deep.
With thunders from her native oak
She quells the floods below,
As they roar on the shore,
When the stormy winds do blow!
When the battle rages loud and long,
And the stormy winds do blow.

The meteor flag of England
Shall yet terrific burn;
Till danger's troubled night depart
And the star of peace return.
Then, then, ye ocean-warriors!
Our song and feast shall flow
To the fame of your name,
When the storm has ceased to blow!
When the fiery fight is heard no more,
And the storm has ceased to blow.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

Taste

FROM "VALEDICTORY STANZA TO KEMBLE"

TASTE, like the silent dial's power,
That, when supernal light is given,
Can measure inspiration's hour,
And tell its height in heaven.

Hohenlinden

ON Linden, when the sun was low,
All bloodless lay the untrodden snow;
And dark as winter was the flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

But Linden saw another sight,
When the drum beat, at dead of night,
Commanding fires of death to light
The darkness of her scenery.

By torch and trumpet fast arrayed
Each horseman drew his battle-blade,
And furious every charger neighed
To join the dreadful revelry.

Then shook the hills with thunder riven,
Then rushed the steed to battle driven,
And louder than the bolts of Heaven,
Far flashed the red artillery.

But redder yet that light shall glow
On Linden's hills of stained snow;
And bloodier yet the torrent flow
Of Iser, rolling rapidly.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

'Tis morn, but scarce yon level sun
Can pierce the war-clouds, rolling dun,
Where furious Frank and fiery Hun,
Shout in their sulphurous canopy.

The combat deepens. On, ye brave
Who rush to glory or the grave!
Wave, Munich! all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry!

Few, few shall part, where many meet!
The snow shall be their winding-sheet,
And every turf beneath their feet
Shall be a soldier's sepulcher.

Lord Ullin's Daughter

A CHIEFTAIN to the Highlands bound
Cries, "Boatman, do not tarry!
And I'll give thee a silver pound
To row us o'er the ferry!"

"Now who be ye, would cross Lochgyle,
This dark and stormy water?"
"Oh, I'm the chief of Ulva's isle,
And this, Lord Ullin's daughter.

"And fast before her father's men
Three days we've fled together,
For should he find us in the glen,
My blood would stain the heather.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

"His horsemen hard behind us ride;
Should they our steps discover,
Then who will cheer my bonny bride
When they have slain her lover?"

Out spoke the hardy Highland wight,
"I'll go, my chief, I'm ready:
It is not for your silver bright,
But for your winsome lady:

"And by my word! the bonny bird
In danger shall not tarry;
So though the waves are raging white,
I'll row you o'er the ferry."

By this the storm grew loud apace,
The water-wraith was shrieking;
And in the scowl of heaven each face
Grew dark as they were speaking.

But still as wilder blew the wind,
And as the night grew drearer
Adown the glen rode armèd men,
Their trampling sounded nearer.

"O haste thee, haste!" the lady cries,
"Though tempest round us gather;
I'll meet the raging of the skies,
But not an angry father!"

The boat has left a stormy land,
A stormy sea before her,
When, oh, too strong for human hand!
The tempest gathered o'er her.

THOMAS CAMPBELL

And still they rowed amidst the roar
Of waters fast prevailing:
Lord Ullin reached that fatal shore—
His wrath was changed to wailing.

For, sore dismayed, through storm and shade
His child he did discover:—
One lovely hand she stretched for aid,
And one was round her lover.

“Come back! come back!” he cried in grief,
“Across this stormy water,
And I’ll forgive your Highland chief:
My daughter!—O my daughter!”

’Twas vain: the loud waves lashed the shore,
Return or aid preventing:
The waters wild went o’er his child,
And he was left lamenting.

JAMES MONTGOMERY

SCOTLAND, 1776–1854

The Common Lot

ONCE, in the flight of ages past,
There lived a Man;—and WHO WAS HE?
Mortal; howe’er thy lot be cast,
That Man resembled thee.

JAMES MONTGOMERY

Unknown the region of his birth,
The land in which he died unknown:
His name has perished from the earth,
This truth survives alone—

That joy and grief, and hope and fear,
Alternate triumphed in his breast:
His bliss and woe—a smile, a tear!
Oblivion hides the rest.

The bounding pulse, the languid limb,
The changing spirit's rise and fall—
We know that these were felt by him,
For these are felt by all.

He suffered—but his pangs are o'er;
Enjoyed—but his delights are fled;
Had friends—his friends are now no more;
And foes—his foes are dead.

He loved—but whom he loved, the grave
Hath lost in its unconscious womb:
Oh, she was fair—but naught could save
Her beauty from the tomb.

He saw whatever thou hast seen,
Encountered all that troubles thee;
He was—whatever thou hast been:
He is—what thou shalt be.

The rolling seasons, day and night,
Sun, moon and stars, the earth and main,
Erewhile his portion, life and light,
To him exist in vain.

JAMES MONTGOMERY

The clouds and sunbeams, o'er his eye
That once their shades and glory threw,
Have left in yonder silent sky
No vestige where they flew.

The annals of the human race,
Their ruins, since the world began,
Of *him* afford no other trace
Than this—THERE LIVED A MAN.

The Stranger

Here is Montgomery's dramatic way of expressing the moral ideal that appeared later in a more elaborate form in the "Sir Launfal" of James Russell Lowell.

A POOR wayfaring man of grief
Hath often crossed me on my way,
Who sued so humbly for relief
That I could never answer "Nay."
I had not power to ask his name,
Whither he went, or whence he came;
Yet there was something in his eye
That won my love—I knew not why.

Once, when my scanty meal was spread,
He entered. Not a word he spake.
Just perishing for want of bread,
I gave him all; he blessed it, brake,
And ate—but gave me part again.
Mine was an angel's portion then;
For while I fed with eager haste,
That crust was manna to my taste.

JAMES MONTGOMERY

I spied him where a fountain burst
Clear from the rock; his strength was gone;
The heedless water mocked his thirst;
He heard it, saw it hurrying on.
I ran to raise the sufferer up:
Thrice from the stream he drained my cup,
Dipped, and returned it running o'er:
I drank and never thirsted more.

'Twas night; the floods were out—it blew
A winter hurricane aloof;
I heard his voice abroad, and flew
To bid him welcome to my roof.
I warmed, I clothed, I cheered my guest—
Laid him on my own couch to rest;
Then made the earth my bed, and seemed
In Eden's garden while I dreamed.

Stripped, wounded, beaten nigh to death,
I found him by the highway side:
I roused his pulse, brought back his breath,
Revived his spirit, and supplied
Wine, oil, refreshment; he was healed.
I had, myself, a wound concealed—
But from that hour forgot the smart,
And peace bound up my broken heart.

In prison I saw him next, condemned
To meet a traitor's doom at morn;
The tide of lying tongues I stemmed,
And honored him midst shame and scorn.
My friendship's utmost zeal to try,
He asked if I for him would die;
The flesh was weak, my blood ran chill,
But the free spirit cried, "I will."

JAMES MONTGOMERY

Then in a moment, to my view,
The stranger darted from disguise:
The tokens in his hands I knew—
My Saviour stood before mine eyes.
He spake; and my poor name he named—
"Of Me thou hast not been ashamed;
These deeds shall thy memorial be;
Fear not! thou didst them unto me."

CAROLINE KEPPEL

ENGLAND, 1735-?

Robin Adair

This song first became popular late in the 18th century when it was sung to an Irish air, Eileen Aroon. Of several versions written in English, this is the best. Burns made a Scotch version.

WHAT'S this dull town to me?
Robin's not near,
He whom I wished to see,
Wished for to hear;
Where's all the joy and mirth
Made life a heaven on earth,
Oh, they're all fled with thee,
Robin Adair!

What made the assembly shine?
Robin Adair:
What made the ball so fine?
Robin was there:

CAROLINE KEPPEL

What, when the play was o'er,
What made my heart so sore?
Oh, it was parting with
Robin Adair!

But now thou art far from me,
Robin Adair;
But now I never see
Robin Adair;
Yet him I loved so well
Still in my heart shall dwell:
Oh, I can ne'er forget
Robin Adair!

Welcome on shore again,
Robin Adair!
Welcome once more again,
Robin Adair!
I feel thy trembling hand:
Tears in thy eyelids stand,
To greet thy native land,
Robin Adair.

Long I ne'er saw thee, Love,
Robin Adair;
Still I prayed for thee, Love,
Robin Adair:
When thou wert far at sea,
Many made love to me,
But still I thought on thee,
Robin Adair.

CAROLINE KEPPEL

Come to my heart again,
Robin Adair;
Never to part again,
Robin Adair;
And if thou still art true,
I will be constant too,
And will wed none but you,
Robin Adair!

THOMAS MOORE

IRELAND, 1779-1852

FEW poets have ever enjoyed greater popularity during their lifetime than this Irish lyricist, whose Muse is forever on the wing, ever fluttering in the gale, ever flashing in the sun. There is flight and sparkle in his poetry.

Hazlitt points out, on the other hand, that "his facility in production lessens the effect of, and hangs as a dead weight upon, what he produces. His levity at last oppresses. The infinite delight he takes in an infinite number of things creates indifference in minds less susceptible of pleasure than his own." Edgar Allan Poe adds this comment in 1840: "A vivid fancy, an epigrammatic spirit, a fine taste and a musical ear have made Moore the most popular poet now living."

A lyricist, gay and nimble, witty and worldly, Moore in *Lalla Rookh*—like Drake in *The Culprit Fay*—is the poet of pure fancy: he never rises into the higher realm of the imagination, where we find a Shelley singing. He never sees anything deeply: he only skims the surface. Highly endowed with a musical swing, he yet lacks the high seriousness that causes poetry to become a stay and a support in our mortal struggle.

THOMAS MOORE

The Flight of Fondest Hopes

FROM "THE FIRE-WORSHIPERS"

MY dreams have boded all too right:
We part—for ever part—to-night!—
I knew, I knew it *could* not last—
'Twas bright, 'twas heavenly, but 'tis past!
Oh! ever thus, from childhood's hour,
I've seen my fondest hopes decay:
I never loved a tree or flower,
But 'twas the first to fade away.
I never nursed a dear gazelle,
To glad me with its soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me, it was sure to die!

The Harp That Once Through Tara's Halls

THE harp that once through Tara's halls
The soul of music shed,
Now hangs as mute on Tara's walls,
As if that soul were fled.
So sleeps the pride of former days,
So glory's thrill is o'er,
And hearts, that once beat high for praise,
Now feel that pulse no more.

No more to chiefs and ladies bright
The Harp of Tara swells;
The chord alone, that breaks at night,
Its tale of ruin tells.

THOMAS MOORE

Thus Freedom now so seldom wakes,
The only throb she gives,
Is when some heart indignant breaks,
To show that still she lives.

Oft in the Stilly Night

OFt in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Fond Memory brings the light
Of other days around me:
The smiles, the tears,
Of boyhood's years,
The words of love then spoken:
The eyes that shone,
Now dimmed and gone,
The cheerful hearts now broken.
Thus in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

When I remember all
The friends so linked together
I've seen around me fall,
Like leaves in wintry weather,
I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet-hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled,
Whose garlands dead,
And all but he departed.

THOMAS MOORE

Thus in the stilly night,
Ere slumber's chain has bound me,
Sad Memory brings the light
Of other days around me.

The Last Rose of Summer

'TIS the last rose of summer
Left blooming alone;
All her lovely companions
Are faded and gone,
No flower of her kindred,
No rose-bud is nigh,
To reflect back her blushes,
Or give sigh for sigh.

I'll not leave thee, thou lone one!
To pine on the stem;
Since the lovely are sleeping,
Go, sleep thou with them.
Thus kindly I scatter
Thy leaves o'er the bed
Where thy mates of the garden
Lie scentless and dead.

So soon may I follow,
When friendships decay,
And from Love's shining circle
The gems drop away.
When true hearts lie withered,
And fond ones are flown,
Oh! who would inhabit
This bleak world alone?

THOMAS MOORE

As Down in the Sunless Retreats

AS down in the sunless retreats of the ocean
Sweet flowers are springing no mortal can see,
So, deep in my soul, the still prayer of devotion
Unheard by the world, rises silent to thee,
My God, silent to thee—
Pure, warm, silent to thee.

As still to the star of its worship, though clouded,
The needle points faithfully o'er the dim sea;
So dark when I roam, in this wintry world shrouded,
The hope of my spirit turns trembling to thee,
My God, trembling to thee—
Pure, warm, trembling to thee.

As a Beam o'er the Face of the Waters May Glow

AS a beam o'er the face of the waters may glow
While the tide runs in darkness and coldness
below;
So the cheek may be tinged with a warm sunny smile,
Though the cold heart to ruin runs darkly the while.

One fatal remembrance, one sorrow that throws
Its bleak shade alike o'er our joys and our woes,
To which life nothing darker or brighter can bring,
For which joy has no balm and affliction no sting—

Oh! this thought in the midst of enjoyment will stay,
Like a dead leafless branch in the summer's bright ray:
The beams of the warm sun play round it in vain,
It may smile in his light, but it blooms not again.

THOMAS MOORE

*From "Farewell! but Whenever You
Welcome the Hour"*

FAREWELL! but whenever you welcome the hour
That awakens the night-song of mirth in your
bower,

Then think of the friend who once welcomed it too,
And forgot his own griefs to be happy with you.
His griefs may return—not a hope may remain
Of the few that have brightened his pathway of pain—
But he ne'er will forget the short vision that threw
Its enchantment around him while lingering with you!

Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy!
Which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.
Long, long be my heart with such memories filled!
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled;
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

*Believe Me, if All Those Endearing Young
Charms*

BELIEVE me, if all those endearing young charms,
Which I gaze on so fondly to-day,
Were to change by to-morrow, and fleet in my arms,
Like fairy-gifts fading away,
Thou wouldst still be adored, as this moment thou art,
Let thy loveliness fade as it will,
And around the dear ruin each wish of my heart
Would entwine itself verdantly still.

THOMAS MOORE

It is not while beauty and youth are thine own,
And thy cheeks unprofaned by a tear,
That the fervor and faith of a soul may be known,
To which time will but make thee more dear!
No, the heart that has truly loved never forgets,
But as truly loves on to the close,
As the sunflower turns to her god when he sets
The same look which she turned when he rose!

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

ENGLAND, 1781-1849

ELLIOTT lived in or near Sheffield in those years when the earth was shaking with the tramp of the toiling millions and the air was vibrating with their cries for justice. Himself a toiler, an ironmonger, he voiced the cause in revolutionary verse.

Yet it was not the tyrannic bread-tax that first made him a poet, but rather the picture of a primrose. This sent him wandering into glens and woodlands. His nature poems are notable, but it was his labor poems that gave his name to all the winds of the world.

He never could forget the haggard faces and broken bodies of the poor. Writing of him in 1844, Dr. Rufus W. Griswold (famous as the literary executor and biographer of Edgar Poe) said: "Elliott has felt the heavy and unequal pressure of the laws, especially of those commercial restrictions by which fully twenty percent is added to the price of bread, turning the sweat of the poor into gold for the rich. . . . This poet of the poor has exercised a greater influence against the cruel and pernicious Corn Laws than any other person unconnected with the administration of public affairs. . . . Carlyle, Ruskin and other critics, seeing in him incontestable signs of genius, have at last handed him up to fame. . . . He ranks now among the first of the living poets of England."

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

The Corn-Law Rhymer is chiefly remembered for his *Corn Law Rhymes*, impassioned poems that cowed oppressors and sent hope into the hearts of the stooped, silent toilers. He became the prophet voice of their indignation against the old injustice of their lot.

Edward Dowden says in a recent critique: "Elliott was a man of slender stature, with narrow forehead, bushy eyebrows under which gleamed the vivid fire of gray-blue eyes, sensitive nostrils, and mouth apt to express love as much as scorn. . . . His imagination was ambitious, and imperfectly trained: he accordingly dealt with large and passionate themes, entering into them with complete *abandon*; and he was hurried on to passages of genuine inspiration; real heights and depths were within his range; heavenly lights alternate with nether darkness."

And George Gilfillan, the famous Scotch critic of the Victorian age, paints a powerful picture of this friend of the struggling poor:

"We can never divest our minds as we read him of the image of a grim son of the furnace, black as Erebus, riving, tearing, and smiting at his reluctant words; storming now and then at the disobedient ends of sentences. Glancing æsthetically at the inspired ironmonger, you see at once that strength is his principal characteristic; nor do you care to settle the question whether it be strength of intellect, or passion, or imagination, or a triple twist of all three.

"Elliott's language reminds you of the blue and nervous veins of a strong hand, so surcharged are his words with the blood of thought and passion. And when it rises to the breath of his indignation, like some 'tumultuous moon-stirred Atlantic'—when he mounts on the full whirlwind of his soul—you are irresistibly reminded of that impetuous prophet who gazed on the 'terrible crystal', and stood below the shadow of the visionary wheels, and walked barefoot upon the stones of fire, and saw in the porch the 'dark idolatries of the alienated Judah', and plucked down forks of the lightning for words to express the fury of his ire,

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

and heaved up from his breast burdens that 'made the pagan mountains shake and Zion's cedars bow.' "

As the spirit moves him at times, Elliott unquestionably has—if not all the inspiration, yet all the fury of the prophet—his forgetfulness of self, his heat of spirit, the contortions and spasms by which he is delivered of his message, as of a demon.

Song

CHILD is thy father dead?
Father is gone!

Why did they tax his bread?

God's will be done!

Mother has sold her bed:

Better to die than wed!

Where shall she lay her head?

Home we have none!

Father clammed¹ thrice a week—

God's will be done!

Long for work did he seek,

Work he found none.

Tears on his hollow cheek

Told what no tongue could speak:

Why did his master break?

God's will be done!

¹ Fasted; was hungry.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Doctor said air was best—
Food we had none;
Father, with panting breast,
Groaned to be gone:
Now he is with the blest—
Mother says death is best!
We have no place of rest—
Yes, we have one!

Battle Song

This is the famous battle-song, which, nearly a century ago, startled the easy-going overlords of England. It has in it something of the tramping thunder of Victor Hugo's "Chasseur."

DAY like our souls is fiercely dark;
What then? 'Tis day!
We sleep no more; the cock crows—hark!
To arms! away!
They come! they come! the knell is rung
Of us or them;
Wide o'er their march the pomp is flung
Of gold and gem.
What collared hound of lawless sway,
To famine dear—
What pensioned slave of Attila,
Leads in the rear?
Come they from Scythian wilds afar,
Our blood to spill?
Wear they the livery of the Czar?
They do his will.
Nor tasselled silk, nor epaulette,
Nor plume, nor torse—

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

No splendor gilds, all sternly met,
Our foot and horse.
But, dark and still, we inly glow,
Condensed in ire!
Strike tawdy slaves, and ye shall know
Our gloom is fire.
In vain your pomp, ye evil powers,
Insults the land;
Wrongs, vengeance and *the cause* are ours,
And God's right hand!
Madmen! they trample into snakes
The wormy clod!
Like fire, beneath their feet awakes
The sword of God!
Behind, before, above, below,
They rouse the brave;
Where'er they go, they make a foe,
Or find a grave.

A Poet's Epitaph

STOP, Mortal! Here thy brother lies,
The Poet of the Poor.
His books were rivers, woods and skies,
The meadow and the moor;
His teachers were the torn hearts' wail,
The tyrant and the slave,
The street, the factory, the jail,
The palace—and the grave!
The meanest thing, earth's feeblest worm,
He feared to scorn or hate;
And honored in a peasant's form
The equal of the great.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

But if he loved the rich who make
The poor man's little more,
Ill could he praise the rich who take
From plundered labor's store.
A hand to do, a head to plan,
A heart to feel and dare—
Tell man's worst foes, here lies the man
Who drew them as they are.

Corn-Law Hymn

LORD, call thy pallid angel,
The tamer of the strong,
And bid him whip with want and woe
The champions of the wrong!
Oh, say thou not to ruin's flood,
"Up, sluggard, why so slow?"
But alone let them groan,
The lowest of the low;
And basely beg the bread they curse
Where millions curse them now!

Marching Song

OTHERS march in freedom's van;
Canst not thou what others can?
Thou a Briton! thou a man!
What are worms, if human thou?

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

Wilt thou, deaf to hiss and groan,
Breed white slaves for every zone?
Make yon robber feed his own,
Then proclaim thyself a man.

Still shall paltry tyrants tell
Freeman when to buy and sell?
Spurn the coward thought to hell!
Tell the miscreants what they are.

Dost thou cringe, that fiends may scowl?
Wert thou born without a soul?
Spaniels feed, are whipped, and howl;
Spaniels! thou art starved and whipped:

Wilt thou still feed palaced knaves?
Shall thy sons be traitors' slaves?
Shall they sleep in workhouse-graves?
Shall they toil for parish-pay?

Wherefore did'st thou woo and wed?
Why a bride was Mary led?
Shall she, dying, curse thy bed?
Tyrants! tyrants! no, by Heaven!

EBENEZER ELLIOTT

The People's Anthem

WHEN wilt thou save the people?
O God of mercy, when?
Not kings and lords, but nations!
Not thrones and crowns, but men!
Flowers of thy heart, O God, are they;
Let them not pass, like weeds away—
Their heritage a sunless day.
God save the people!

Shall crime bring crime forever,
Strength aiding still the strong?
Is it thy will, O Father,
That man shall toil for wrong?
“No!” say thy mountains; “No!” thy skies;
Man’s clouded sun shall brightly rise,
And songs be heard instead of sighs.
God save the people!

JANE TAYLOR
ENGLAND, 1783-1824

The Philosopher's Scales

*Here are stanzas of serious fooling, all of them weighted
with moral ideas.*

A MONK, when his rites sacerdotal were o'er,
In the depth of his cell with its stone-covered
floor,
Resigning to thought his chimerical brain,
Once formed the contrivance we now shall explain;
But whether by magic's or alchemy's powers
We know not; indeed, 'tis no business of ours.

Perhaps it was only by patience and care,
At last, that he brought his invention to bear.
In youth 'twas projected, but years stole away,
And ere 'twas complete he was wrinkled and gray;
But success is secure, unless energy fails;
And at length he produced THE PHILOSOPHER'S SCALES.

"What were they?" you ask. You shall presently see;
These scales were not made to weigh sugar and tea.
O no; for such properties wondrous had they,
That qualities, feelings, and thoughts they could weigh,
Together with articles small or immense,
From mountains or planets to atoms of sense.

JANE TAYLOR

Naught was there so bulky but there it would lay,
And naught so ethereal but there it would stay,
And naught so reluctant but in it must go;
All which some examples more clearly will show.

The first thing he weighed was the head of Voltaire,
Which retained all the wit that had ever been there.
As a weight, he threw in the torn scrap of a leaf,
Containing the prayer of the penitent thief;
When the skull rose aloft with so sudden a spell
That it bounced like a ball on the roof of the cell.

One time he put in Alexander the Great,
With the garment that Dorcas had made for a weight;
And though clad in armor from sandals to crown,
The hero rose up, and the garment went down.

A long row of almshouses, amply endowed
By a well-esteemed Pharisee, busy and proud,
Next loaded one scale; while the other was pressed
By those mites the poor widow dropped into the chest;
Up flew the endowment, not weighing an ounce,
And down, down the farthing-worth came with a
bounce.

By further experiments (no matter how)
He found that ten chariots weighed less than one plow;
A sword with gilt trapping rose up in the scale,
Though balanced by only a ten-penny nail;
A shield and a helmet, a buckler and spear,
Weighed less than a widow's uncrystallized tear.
A lord and a lady went up at full sail,
When a bee chanced to light on the opposite scale;
Ten doctors, ten lawyers, two courtiers, one earl,

JANE TAYLOR

Ten counsellors' wigs, full of powder and curl,
All heaped in one balance and swinging from thence,
Weighed less than a few grains of candor and sense;
A first-water diamond, with brilliants begirt,
Than one good potato just washed from the dirt;
Yet not mountains of silver and gold could suffice
One pearl to outweigh,—'twas THE PEARL OF GREAT
PRICE.

Last of all, the whole world was bowled in at the grate,
With the soul of a beggar to serve for a weight,
When the former sprang up with so strong a rebuff
That it made a vast rent and escaped at the roof!
When balanced in air, it ascended on high,
And sailed up aloft, a balloon in the sky;
While the scale with the soul in 't so mightily fell
That it jerked the philosopher out of his cell.

REGINALD HEBER

ENGLAND, 1783-1826

A Bow-Meeting Song

'T WAS merry then in England
 (Our ancient records tell)
With Robin Hood and Little John
 Who dwelt by down and dell;
And yet we love the bold outlaw
 Who braved a tyrant foe,
Whose cheer was the deer,
 And his only friend the bow!

'T was merry then in England
 In autumn's dewy morn,
When echo started from her hill
 To hear the bugle-horn.
And beauty, mirth, and warrior worth
 In garb of green did go
The shade to invade
 With the arrow and the bow.

LEIGH HUNT

ENGLAND, 1784-1859

SHELLEY, in a lyric letter, says of Hunt:

"One of those happy souls,
Who are the salt of earth, and without whom
The world would smell like what it is—a tomb."

Abou Ben Adhem is his most popular poem. On this slight foothold he is supported above the gulf of oblivion. He marked a moment in literature, the transition from the aristocracy to the democracy of letters. He was only a mortal, though he lived with the immortals (Shelley, Keats, Byron and Lamb were his contemporaries); and he does not deserve to be altogether lost in the crowd. He was a vagabond of literature, a hack of genius, who did much to popularize the love of poetry and letters in general among his fellow-countrymen. His anthologies, *Imagination and Fancy* and *Wit and Humor*, have rendered me great assistance in many ways.

Abou Ben Adhem

A BOU BEN ADHEM (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold:
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,

LEIGH HUNT

And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord,"
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still, and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow-men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed;
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

The Dearest Poets

WERE I to name, out of the times gone by,
The poets dearest to me, I should say,
Pulci for spirits, and a fine, free way;
Chaucer for manners, and close, silent eye;
Milton for classic taste, and harp strung high:
Spenser for luxury and sweet, sylvan play;
Horace for chatting with, from day to day;
Shakespeare for all, but most, society.

But which take with me, could I take but one?
Shakespeare—as long as I was unoppressed
With the world's weight, making sad thoughts intenser:
But did I wish, out of the common sun
To lay a wounded heart in leafy rest,
And dream of things far off and healing—Spenser.

LEIGH HUNT

Jenny Kissed Me

JENNY kissed me when we met,
Jumping from the chair she sat in.
Time, you thief! who love to get
Sweets into your list, put that in.
Say I'm weary, say I'm sad;
Say that health and wealth have missed me;
Say I'm growing old, but add—
Jenny kissed me!

Cupid Swallowed

T'OTHER day, as I was twining
Roses for a crown to dine in,
What, of all things, midst the heap,
Should I light on, fast asleep,
But the little desperate elf,
The tiny traitor—Love himself!
By the wings I pinched him up
Like a bee, and in a cup
Of my wine I plunged and sank him;
And what d'ye think I did?—I drank him!
Faith, I thought him dead. Not he!
There he lives with tenfold glee;
And now, this moment, with his wings
I feel him tickling my heart-strings.

LEIGH HUNT

Jaffar

JAFFAR, the Barmecide, the good vizier,
The poor man's hope, the friend without a peer—
Jaffar was dead, slain by a doom unjust;
And guilty Haroun, sullen with mistrust
Of what the good, and even the bad, might say,
Ordained that no man living, from that day,
Should dare to speak his name on pain of death.
All Araby and Persia held their breath;
All but the brave Mondeer: he, proud to show
How far for love a grateful soul could go,
And facing death for very scorn and grief
(For his great heart wanted a great relief)
Stood forth in Bagdad, daily, in the square
Where once had stood a happy house, and there
Harangued the tremblers at the scimitar
On all they owed to the divine Jaffar.

“Bring me this man,” the caliph cried; the man
Was brought, was gazed upon. The mutes began
To bind his arms. “Welcome, brave cords,” cried he,
“From bonds far worse Jaffar delivered me;
From wants, from shames, from loveless household
fears;
Made a man's eyes friends with delicious tears;
Restored me, loved me, put me on a par
With his great self. How can I pay Jaffar?”

Haroun, who felt that on a soul like this
The mightiest vengeance could but fall amiss,
Now deigned to smile, as one great lord of fate
Might smile upon another half as great.

LEIGH HUNT

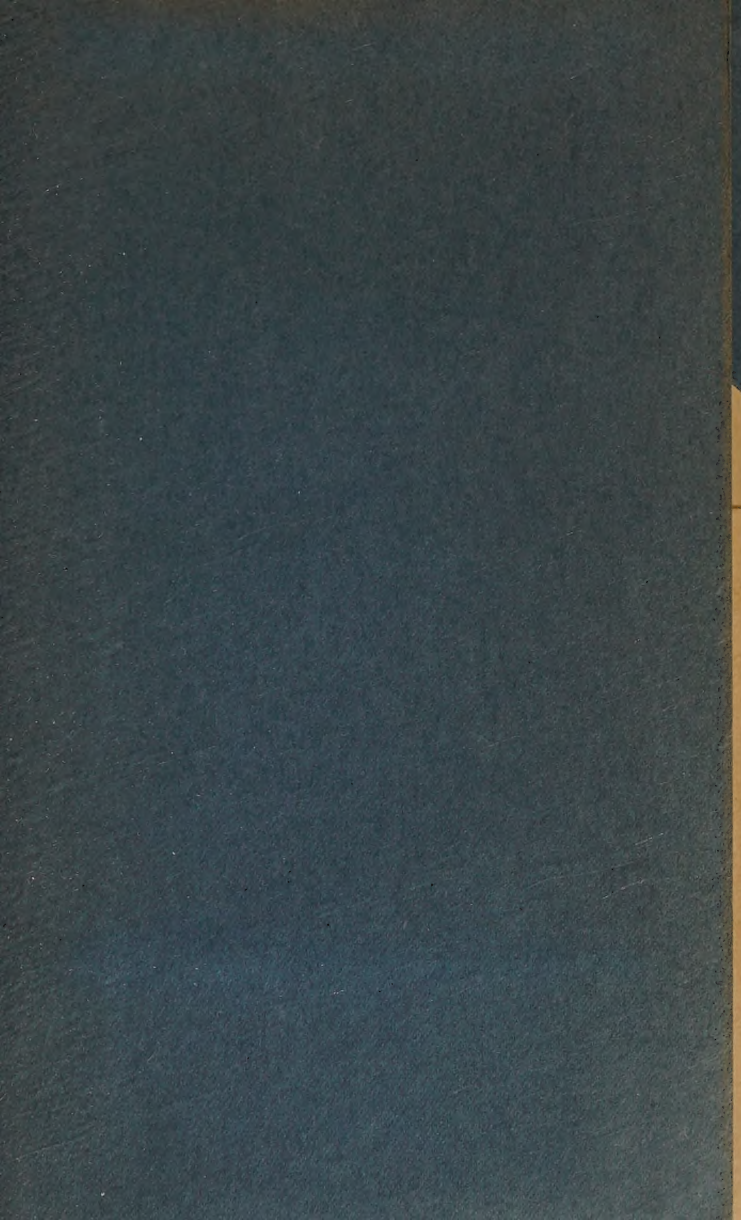
He said, "Let worth grow frenzied if it will;
The caliph's judgment shall be master still.
Go, and since gifts so move thee, take this gem,
The richest in the Tartar's diadem,
And hold the giver as thou deemest fit!"
"Gifts!" cried the friend; he took and holding it,
High toward the heavens, as though to meet his star,
Exclaimed, "This, too, I owe to thee, Jaffar!"

The Grasshopper and the Cricket

It is related that Hunt and Keats each wrote a sonnet on this subject during one evening. While Hunt's is not a great sonnet, it is one of his best achievements. Keats wrote an equally good sonnet, but one that pales by comparison with his best work.

GREEN little vaulter in the sunny grass,
Catching your heart up at the feel of June—
Sole voice that's heard amidst the lazy noon
When even the bees lag at the summoning brass;
And you, warm little housekeeper, who class
With those who think the candles come too soon,
Loving the fire, and with your tricksome tune
Nick the glad silent moments as they pass!

O sweet and tiny cousins, that belong,
One to the fields, the other to the hearth,
Both have your sunshine: both, though small, are strong
At your clear hearts; and both seem given to earth
To ring in thoughtful ears this natural song—
In doors and out, summer and winter, mirth.



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